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Half Portions.



HER FIRST DINNER.—"Most extraordinary young person." (See page 70.)

HALF PORTIONS



LIFE PUBLISHING COMPANY

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Our Fames.

Our James.



UNTIL I managed to persuade Kitty to investigate my social plane, she had never displayed any interest in anything solvent that lived west of Third Avenue. When she graduated from college she went in for scientific slumming, and developed theories about the masses. Her residence in one of the settlements on the east side resulted in a thesis on the "Social Value of Bath-tubs in Tenements," which they say is a valuable contribution to science, in that it proves conclusively that bathing facilities in tenements will not be effective until the masses are educated to the point where they will not welcome the tubs merely as convenient receptacles for coal.

I haven't read the thesis, but I went to see Kitty get her Ph.D. at the University. She was stunning in her mortar-board and black gown, but she has since told me that the gown she wore a few months later, when old Dr. Brown and I gave her a Mrs., was much more becoming and worthy of preservation.

After the wedding, Kitty gave up fourteen of her downtown socials and clubs. She devoted, however, a great deal of energy to my instruction regarding the practical benefits of applied Slumology, but my first real

lesson—one in intelligent philanthropy—was given one afternoon in Sixth Avenue.

I had given a nickel to one of my bachelor day clients, an old blind man with blue spectacles and a trayful of pencils, on which rested a placard advertising the awful results to the bearer of a too close intimacy with dynamite.

"Don't you know better than to give money to beggars?" sighed Kitty, with a pained expression.

"Why not?" I asked. "That old boy isn't a beggar. He's blind. He's trying to make an honest living. I didn't take the pencils; they're always crumbly, but that makes no difference. He's one of your deserving poor."

"Deserving fiddlesticks!" lectured Kitty. "That man has two good eyes and a bank account. I believe he owns a flat in Harlem besides. We investigated him when I was in the settlement. He used to follow a woolly dog on lower Broadway, but it didn't pay after we notified the police. Then the old rascal took out a license to sell lead pencils, and came uptown with civilization, and stupids like yourself, who don't know the deserving poor when you see them. It's too bad they didn't have chairs in Sociology when you went to college."

Of course I felt like a fool, and accepted Kitty's advice to contribute yearly to the society that makes a business of running down men who make a profession of avoiding work. I have since learned to be very suspicious of appealing hard luck. I avoid the totally blind and men with shoestrings and no extremities worth mentioning.

At dinner one evening Kitty announced that she had found a deserving tramp.

"Where is he?" I asked.



"Kitty had found the tramp at the arca-gate."

"Down in the basement eating his supper," she answered, with an I'm-all-right inflection. "He's a jewel."

"You'd better tie a string to him and exhibit him at one of your parloꝝ conferences," I suggested. "By the

way, have you investigated him?" I wanted to show Kitty that I had learned something.

"Not exactly," she answered. "He says he has just arrived in town, and he has no references. But I applied the work test. Jane says he beats rugs better than an Irishwoman at a dollar and a half a day."

That morning, Kitty, on returning from one of her dabs at the east side, had found the tramp at the area gate. He offered to work for his dinner. She thought the offer was merely a blind, and, after consultation with Jane, they set him to work on the area-way with a bucket of water and a broom, Jane's experience and Kitty's science suggesting the outside test. The work was well done. At dinner the man appeared genuinely hungry, and asked for work in the afternoon. Kitty set him to work on the rugs, and he raised such a dust in the back yard that she engaged him to return the next morning to try his hand on the carpets. We were in the midst of the spring upheaval.

"That man will never come back," I warned Kitty, after she finished her story. "He's too good to be true."

"Now, Tom, don't be a goose. He works. Real tramps never do. Besides, he is awfully polite, and he uses good English. I believe he is a superior sort of man in hard luck."

"All right," I agreed, "but think of what Sally Mason and the rest of your scientific slummers will say when they hear that you have believed an uninvestigated tramp."

"No man I've believed in has ever deceived me"—Kitty looked across at me with a smile—"except one." And then we talked about that for an hour, and forgot the tramp.

Kitty was right. The tramp returned the next morning, and I liked his looks. He seemed to understand what Kitty wanted him to do, and when I came uptown in the evening she reported that he had worked like a trooper all day.

That was the beginning of a period of domestic bliss. James proved himself so capable that Kitty engaged him indefinitely during house-cleaning, and later on permanently, as man-of-all-work. He was dignified, respectful, and thoroughly capable. He knew how every-



"There was no fault to be found with James."

thing ought to be done, and did so much that Kitty threatened to take to the slums again. She said house-keeping was no trick, with James in the basement to carry out her orders. I felt his presence in a variety of ways. My chafing-dish lost its indifferent gloomy appearance, and in less than a month the accumulations of years had been polished off my grandfather's candlesticks. There was no fault to be found with James. Even the Street Cleaning Department was satisfied with the way he sorted our house refuse. This was especially gratifying to Kitty, for our Irish cook and the Italian ash-man seldom agreed as to what constituted ashes or garbage. Once she was obliged to get an expert opinion from the Commissioner regarding the disposal of seven dead mice we had caught in a trap. Jane insisted that they were not garbage, on the grounds that the regulations defined garbage as table scraps; the Italian said any fool could see that they were not ashes. A scene ensued, and when the matter was referred to Kitty the mice had been changing barrels several days. James wrapped doubtful articles in the paper bundle.

We never questioned James about his antecedents or past history. Once Kitty ventured an inquiry, and he became so embarrassed and looked so sad that she changed the subject, thinking she had unwittingly called up some sad experience in the past.

Lack of personal information, however, did not worry us. James was his own guarantee.

II.

One morning, after he had been with us nearly a year, he went out to order some groceries and didn't come back. At first we thought that some accident had detained him. A day or two passed before it occurred to me to call at the police station. Kitty had imagined James mangled beneath cable cars; floating silently in the North River; falling dead, alone and without friends, in the street; and in several other equally gloomy situations. The Captain could give me no information, and suggested a visit to the morgue. I objected, but Kitty insisted that it was my duty, so I tackled the creepiest job I have ever attempted. James wasn't there.

I was beginning to think that possibly James wasn't sick or dead, and asked Kitty to count the silver. Nothing was missing; but I had the locks changed and burglar alarms put in downstairs. In about two weeks Kitty exhausted her imaginative powers on the accident theory, and tried murder and suicide for a day or two. Then the reaction set in. She surprised me one evening by saying:

"Tom, I always did think James was a scamp. I never told you, but he acted very queerly at times."

"How do you make him out a rascal?" I asked. "He didn't take anything, and I owe him a month's wages. We got as much as we gave. He stood the work test."

"Bother the work test!" said Kitty, impatiently. "I didn't mean that. Perhaps we did get all we gave. But we trusted him, and he didn't say—say good-by." That was all Kitty had against James.

"Here's a dinner invitation from Sally Mason," observed Kitty one morning at breakfast, several months

after James had disappeared. "She says she has invited some very interesting people, most of them students of social problems."

I had had enough of social problems, and said so.

"But, Tom," she pleaded, "we ought to go. We haven't been there for ages. Besides, we ought to be grateful to Sally. If she hadn't asked me to that dinner when I met you—don't you remember?"

I remembered, and we went.

III.

We arrived just on the hour, and when we went down, Sally, between looks at the clock, told us that she was waiting for but one more guest.

Kitty was in her element. I was doing my best to tell a girl, who had made a study of the slums of London, what Kitty had told me about the slums of New York, when the bell rang, and a moment later the portieres parted, and there, in evening dress, stood *our James!*

Completely flabbergasted, I looked to Kitty for help.

I was too late. Sally was presenting our man-of-all-work to her guests, and before I could catch Kitty's eye he was bowing to her. When my turn came I bowed stiffly, and expected James to show some signs of recognition. He remarked, without the slightest trace of embarrassment, that he was very glad to meet me, and began discussing atmospheric conditions with Sally. I didn't catch the name she gave, and I could have choked the man for his impudence.

"Now," chirped Sally, "we'll go out. Doctor, will you give your arm to Mrs. Jackson?"

Kitty looked a bit chilly, but she was equal to the occasion, and took the arm James offered with the quiet dignity that characterized him when he shoveled out our ashes.



"Completely flabbergasted, I looked to Kitty for help."

"Come, Tom," said Sally, and in a dazed condition I went out to dinner, vaguely realizing that Kitty was preceding on the arm of our former hired man, and wondering how he had managed to work Jack Mason for a dinner.

"For heaven's sake! who is that man with Kitty?" I managed to whisper to Sally, as we sat down.

"Why, don't you know him?" she explained. "That's Doctor J. Mortimer Stubbs. He's awfully interesting. He has just completed a book called 'Personal Investigations in All Social Classes.' He spent several years getting the material, and they say it's one of the best things that has ever been done."

"I think I have met him somewhere," I answered. The truth suddenly dawned on me. Kitty and I had been investigated according to the latest method.

* * * * *

Kitty and Doctor J. Mortimer Stubbs sat at the other end of the table, too far away from me to hear their conversation.

After a few chilly moments, I noticed that they brightened up and appeared very much interested in each other. After the ladies had gone I took the vacant chair beside the Doctor, and, offering him a match, asked:

"Stubbs, don't you think you owe me an explanation? I don't object to furnishing material for science, but what in the world did you find in my house?"

"I do," answered the Doctor, gracefully, "and an apology for leaving you so rudely. I have apologized to Mrs. Jackson. I assure you that I intended to call and explain myself. My application for work at your home was accidental. I had lived with tramps, beggars, thieves, and all the other discontented classes, when it occurred

to me that it would be an original idea to make a study of the fairly contented man—the man who didn't steal, beg or want society done over. Fortunately, I obtained a position with you, and I may say the chapter there written I consider my best."

"Thank you," I replied; "you found the right place. I am contented."

"You have a very good reason to be," said the Doctor, which showed that he was a man of correct observation.



My Lady of the Veil.

My Lady of the Veil.

"Kitty," said I, "I had a queer experience to-day."

"Yes?" said Kitty. "You got home to dinner on time."

Now, that was unkind. I splashed my soup upon the immaculate cloth for revenge. Kitty abhors spots on her table linen.

"No," said I, "it wasn't that. In me, promptness approaches tragedy; this was downright comedy."

Kitty raised her eyebrows. She has very expressive eyebrows. No doubt near association with her eyes has taught them a thing or two.

"Something funny happened to me, too," she said.

"I spoke first," I objected, hurriedly.

"Well, gracious goodness! Why don't you tell it then?"

"Give me time."

"You'd squander it," said Kitty.

There are certain remarks of Kitty's which I ignore.

"It was this way," I began. "You know the quaint French restaurant in which I take my luncheon? Yes, you do. Old Pierre's, opposite the Post Office. Well, I took my accustomed seat there to-day, fourth table back, facing the windows, and ordered my modest repast. Old Pierre has a son who has fierce moustaches, and waits upon me. He has done so for ages. Each day the son of Pierre says, '*Bon jour, monsieur*,' as he places my chair and pokes me in back of my knees with it till they unhinge and deposit me with a jerk in my seat. The son

of Pierre then remarks that 'To-day monsieur vill haf *une cotelette au naturel et une salade*, ees eet not?' And I say that it is. And then Pierre's son runs away with little chicken-steps until he has overcome half the distance to the kitchen, when suddenly he wheels like a wind-dodged kite and chicken-steps hurriedly back. Again before me, he strokes the napkin upon his arm deprecatingly, as if it were to blame for his oversight, and suggests that 'Monsieur vill haf *petit pois avec, n'est ce pas?*' I nod, the son of Pierre gives his moustaches a ferocious yank, says, '*Certainment!*' and skims away. And it's just as apt to be a softshell crab he returns with as a chop. The son of Pierre has a hideous memory.

"To-day things were quite the same, and I was idly speculating upon what my chop would turn out to be, when the door opened and a woman entered, and took a seat facing me at the table in my row, nearest the window. She wore an exceedingly heavy veil, and that, and the light at her back, combined to render her features absolutely void to me. But she had a remarkably pretty figure, and was well gowned."

"Thank you," said Kitty, making me a little bow.

"Why do you thank me?"

"For so carefully noting the virtues of my sex. I had been led to believe you were sadly deficient in that line towards all other women but myself." Kitty used fine irony.

I laughed a hollow, before-breakfast laugh. "Where did you get that idea?" I demanded.

"Not so very far away," replied Kitty, hurling a lump of sugar at me, and skillfully landing it in my coffee. That pleased me, because, while a good portion of the berry-brown nectar got in my hair and eyes, and on

my shirt front, considerably more spread itself over the tablecloth.

"Thank you," said I, sweetly; "I wanted another lump."

I stirred my coffee a moment, tasted it reflectively, and went on:

"While I was regarding this woman, who looked Frenchy, and trying to recall where I had seen her before, a man, who was French, came in and seated himself at the table directly before me, thereby facing her.

"I recognized him as a certain man-about-town of unsavory repute. He is what might be termed a low high-roller, and it made me sad to see him seat himself there and stare at that poor girl."

"I suppose it did," remarked Kitty; "he must have interfered with your view."

"Dear, don't interrupt so."

"I don't think this is a funny story, anyway." Kitty was beginning to light dangerous fires in those big brown eyes of hers.

"Wait! I'm coming to that. This quaint restaurant of old Pierre's is crowded at noon, and these two late-comers had to wait their turns to give their orders. My Lady of the Veil studied the *menu*, and the low high-roller studied My Lady. I studied them both.



"That aged rascal."

"Presently, things began to develop. My nearest neighbor drew forth a silver card-case, and a gold pencil, selected a card, and wrote several words thereon. Then he caught the eye of old Pierre, at about the same time old Pierre's eye caught the glint of a half-dollar, and that aged rascal chicken-footed it over to him, received the card and the coin, put the latter in his pocket, and the former upon the table before My Lady of the Veil. Then he fled.

"The girl glanced from the *menu* to the card, read it, looked up, and *caught my eye!* I knew that, because I was sitting to one side of the old sinner before me, and she turned her head squarely in my direction.

"Then she looked down again—rather quickly, I thought. Kitty, look out! Don't throw that fork; you'll break the clock!"

Kitty hesitated a moment, and then abandoned the contemplated bombardment.

"Go on, you brute!" she said.

"Thanks! For a wonder, My Lady of the Veil had a pencil in her purse, and she dug it forth, and then she also wrote something upon the card. Then the son of Pierre appearing, with the intention of making his customary announcement of the immediate arrival of my luncheon if I would only exercise a little patience, she beckoned him to her.

"The son of Pierre arrived with a wonderful bow, and listened attentively to some low French-spoken directions. Then he stealthily pounced upon the card and straightway *brought it to me*, sneaking it into my hand as if it were a bomb, and almost hissing, '*Pour vous, monsieur!*'

"'Are you sure?' I asked, bewildered.

"*Certainment, monsieur!*" exclaimed the son of Pierre, with an injured shrug. Then he also fled.

"I glanced at the much-traveled card.

"It was a visiting card, with the wicked low high-roller's name engraved upon it, and above the name was written in a man's hand, 'May I join you at luncheon, mademoiselle?' and beneath, in a woman's hand—which struck me as being disguised—'*Certainly, monsieur.*'

"I turned the card about, puzzled. Why had it been returned to me?

"Glancing up, I received a nod, and I have no doubt a smile from My Lady of the Veil, who was staring directly at me.

"Then I looked at the owner of the card. He was squirming about in his chair like an impatient schoolboy, trying violently, but vainly, to catch his fair neighbor's eye.

"And then the key flashed upon me, and I almost choked with the laugh I had to smother in my throat.

"Evidently My Lady of the Veil had not seen the Frenchman write the card, but, catching my eye when she looked up after reading it, had mistaken me for the sender.

"Now, Kitty, don't forget that you are a lady. I knew you would applaud me for giving that old reprobate a lesson and the girl a bit of good advice, so I promptly arose and stepped to the table by the window and sat down with my back to the Frenchman, facing My Lady of the Veil. I heard the Frenchman gasp."

Pausing there to consider any remarks Kitty might have to make, I heard her gasp also, and so I hastened on. It is a treat to hear Kitty gasp, ordinarily, because her gasp is very delicious. But now there seemed to

be certain ominous forebodings intermingled with its music.

"Pierre's son always brought me sufficient luncheon for two," I continued, hurriedly; "and so, when he eventually came, I divided with My Lady of the Veil. I had hoped that when she began to eat she would remove her spider-web mask and reveal whether or not her features were in keeping with her voice, which was very sweet. But she only raised the veil to the level of her upper lip. I saw that her mouth and chin were very lovely."

I glanced at Kitty under my lashes. She was trying hard to frown, but, strange to say, a merry smile predominated!

"She was really a little beauty!" I exclaimed, with emphasis.

Kitty jangled the ice in her water glass.

"Did you flirt with her, Jack?" she asked.

"Dearest!" I cried. "How could I, with *you* at home! I lunched with that girl because I saw that she was a lady, and I thought it my duty to do all in my power to shield her from both present and future dangers of the sort she so foolishly plunged herself into. Her conversation, after her momentary embarrassment passed, was that of a lady, and we had a charming tête-à-tête luncheon. She knew no end of the people we know, but she defied my every effort to probe her identity, and when she left she made me promise to remain in my seat five minutes after she had gone. Before we had talked long, the low high-roller took his ungracious leave, fighting mad, and very evidently saying unparliamentary things under his breath. Then I read mademoiselle a little lecture upon indiscretion in innocent maidenhood, and told her the true history of the card."



"You're just as true as true!"

"I knew it all the time!" cried Kitty, clapping her hands.

"You! Great Dewey! You—you! How did *you* know?"

Kitty jumped up. "It's a confession!" she laughed, coming and cuddling upon my knee. "Jack—now, don't get angry, you big stupid!—the Lady of the Veil was *I*!"

It was my turn to gasp, and I did so with such success that the candles flickered. Kitty knew the danger of giving me time to get in a word edgewise, and continued precipitately:

"I went there, Jack, just because I wanted to see you when you didn't know that I was watching you; just because I love you, dear. And, oh! when that old beast sent his card to me I was almost frightened to death. Of course I saw him write it. I was just going to jump right up and run and get behind my great big husband, when—forgive me, Jack—the idea flashed into my head, like the devil into the belfry, to frustrate the old reprobate and test you at the same time. So I returned the card to you. When you succumbed to temptation and came over I could have killed you—that was my momentary embarrassment. But then"—Kitty pushed herself away from me with both hands upon my chest and looked deep into my eyes—"then, Jack, you punished me so! For my great big darling acted *so* nobly, and didn't try to flirt one bit! And when you told My Lady of the Veil why you had lunched with her, and lectured her so tactfully; and when you spoke so sweetly and lovingly of me, and held me up as a model to her—oh, Jack, I was just dying to *eat you up* right there before everybody! I was so delighted and proud, and I felt so ashamed of having dared to test you. Oh, you old sweetie!"

And Kitty made serious attempts to kiss me.

"Dearest," said I, reproachfully, "did you go to old Pierre's because you doubted me?"

"Jack!" cried Kitty. "Indeed, no! I went there because I wanted to watch you lunch alone, and because I wanted to be near you."

And I know that was her only reason, no matter what you may think, reader. I guess I know Kitty better than you do, anyhow.

I gave a relieved sigh. "You're a perfect actress, dear," I said.

"I knew you didn't know me." Kitty was radiant. She loves to have people think she can act. And she can, too. Then she cuddled up closer and whispered:

"I'll never, never, *never* have a shadow of a doubt about you, Jack. You're just as true as true!"

Now, that hurt me quite poignantly, because it happens that I had recognized my wife the moment she entered the quaint little restaurant of wicked old Pierre.

These Lords of Creation.

These Lords of Creation.

They had quarreled, and seriously. It had been entirely her fault—but he was in love.

“I think I can manage it,” she said, reflectively, as she passed rapidly about the room, giving deft, expressive touches.

A fire was burning on the hearth, and the air was sweet with the fragrance of roses. She lowered a shade here, drew back a drapery there, till a soft half-light filled the room. Then she rolled the comfortable morris to a companionable nearness to her own low one by the tea-table, and smiled to herself a satisfied smile as she surveyed her work.

There was a familiar step in the hall. With a quick movement she snatched a rose from a vase, flirted a few drops from its wet stem onto the open pages of a book, then, dropping the rose, vanished.

He had come fully determined to be severe—but just, you know. He could well afford to be that. She had trifled with him long enough, he had reasoned to himself as he walked down the avenue. She had been in the wrong, wholly so, and he should not humble himself. She would be penitent, of course, and he would be kind and gentle, as it behooved him to be, yet he would reason with her and show her wherein she had erred. They would make up, for she was sweet and amiable, and he was so entirely right. So he passed into the room with a conscious air of victory.

She was a long time in coming. He began to be anxious. She couldn't possibly refuse to see him, could she?

Aimlessly he wandered about the room. A dainty white-bound book he had given her lay face down, open, on the wide corner seat. There was a faint imprint on the soft cushion, and a rose lay on the floor. His stern face relaxed a little, and a tender light stole into his eyes. He picked up the book; it was blotted with tears.

She had been crying! Poor child, perhaps he had been harsh. His heart gave a remorseful pang as he put the book away and turned to greet her.

"You are pale," anxiously, as his troubled eyes sought her face.

"A trifle, perhaps."

She smiled as her hand lay for a moment in his eager clasp.

"My head has been troubling me a bit," and she smiled again, a sad, wan little smile.

"It was my fault," he said, reproachfully, drawing the big chair closer, and trying to catch a glimpse of her face, hidden in the shadow.

"Oh, no!" Her voice was low and he bent to hear it

"Madelon, are you crying?" fiercely.

"No, that is—well, I didn't sleep much, and—and—" Her voice broke; the fragile cup slipped from her hand and lay in fragments on the floor, while her dewy eyes met his in an upward, appealing glance.

Thereupon the expected happened.

"I was a brute," he insisted later, for the hundredth time; "a perfect brute."



"Thereupon the expected happened."

Her sweet voice made no denial.
"But you'll forgive me, won't you, dear?"
To which the maiden generously vouchsafed a "yes."

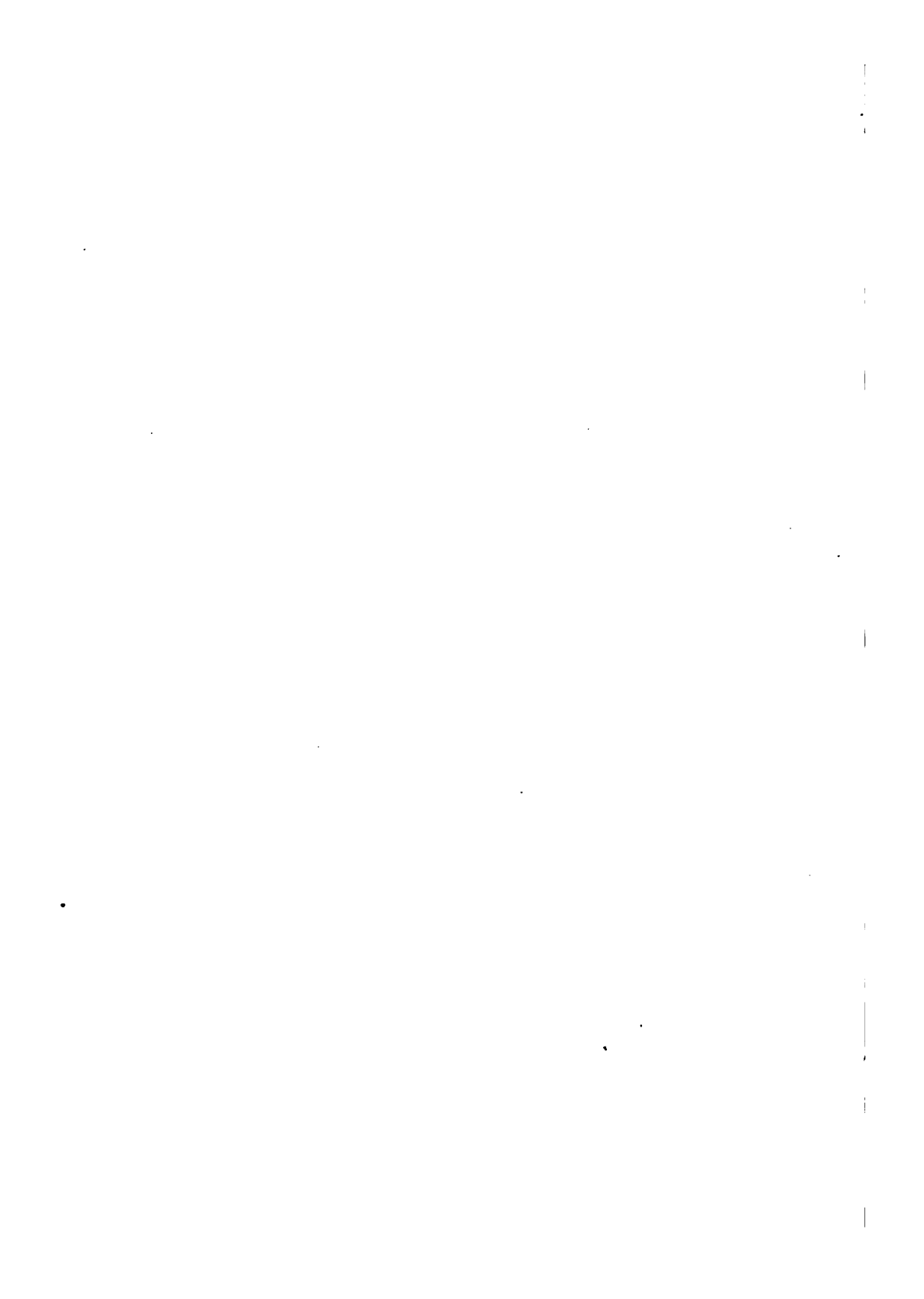


*"She watched him from her framework
of silken draperies."*

She watched him from her framework of silken draperies as he passed up the avenue, and she waved her hand as he turned the corner; then she stood for a moment looking out into the deepening twilight. Then she slowly turned, and there was a triumphant gleam in her eyes as she crossed the room. With a half-laugh, she replaced the book on the table, and looked for the rose. It was gone! Then, stooping, she gathered the bits of broken china.

"It paid," scornfully.

Then, with an exultant smile: "I thought I could manage," she said.



A Recapitulation.

A Recapitulation.

They had passed through the lines of laughing bridesmaids and groomsmen, and heroically received the showers of rice, and were now in the carriage on their way to the train.

He had recovered from the feeling of strangeness occasioned by hastily changing his clothes in an unfamiliar room, and she was thanking her stars that the ordeal of bidding her mother good-by had been so easily accomplished. It was the first moment they had been absolutely alone since the ceremony. The strain was over and all their troubles lay behind them, yet neither could find the words to begin a conversation. He lay back in the seat, thinking. He was wondering if, after all, he had not made a mistake; if he would not have been happier with the other girl; but no sooner had the idea presented itself than he was appalled at his heresy.

She was thinking, too. She was thinking of the impatience he had exhibited when they were bidding her parents farewell, and she was contrasting his brusque manners and speech with the unfailing courtesy and good nature of the other fellow.

They were both in dangerous moods, yet swayed by a common impulse they leaned forward and kissed each other. He took her hand.

"Can you realize it, dear?" he almost whispered.

"What?" she asked.

"That we are married at last."

"Hardly. Didn't the ceremony seem horribly short?"



A RECAPITULATION.—*"They had passed through the lines of bridesmaids and groomsmen, and heroically received the showers of rice."*

Do you think he put it all in? He put in that part 'for better for worse, till death us do part.' It always makes me shudder. Can you realize *that*? We have taken each other for better for worse, for richer for poorer, till death us do part. That phrase is mournful to me. I almost felt like backing out when I had to say those words."

He laughed. "They are incisively final, aren't they? I felt a qualm of hesitancy, too, when we came to that part. Suppose we had both balked?"

"We were too heedful of public appearances to do anything like that. What a senseless formality it is! I'm half inclined to agree with Grant Allen. What is the use of marriage, anyway?"

"Are you regretting it so soon?" he asked.

She pressed his hand. "No, dear," she answered, "but you musn't begin a conversation of this sort so early. Perhaps if I detailed to you my views of marriage you would be shocked."

"I think the conversation is a little serious for such a new couple. We ought to be overwhelming each other with nonsensical sentimentalities."

"You are entirely too practical to tolerate any exhibition of sentiment, while I am absurdly sentimental. I suppose that is one of our reasons for loving each other."

"You wrong me there. I have a good supply of sentiment, although it is not very apparent. My innate bashfulness is the cause of its repression."

"We are horribly prosaic. I don't think either of us has any sentiment. The idea of analyzing each other's character on such an occasion as this! Make love to me, sir," she commanded, imperiously.

He changed his position awkwardly and put his arm around her. She drew back almost violently.

"Not that way. That is the coarsest form of expressing love. Talk to me. Tell me of your love for me; your ideals; your pet plans for our enjoyment; your expectations. Tell me the numberless delightful little confidences you have reserved for your wife. Show me the inner side of your nature. Confidence is love. The other is mere gratification."

"I hadn't an idea that you were so fanciful—or poetical, rather," he answered.

She sighed. She was thinking of one who was poetical and fanciful enough to have overwhelmed her with love-making of her own kind, upon far less provocation than she had given this man. One who was thoroughly delightful and congenial, but so thoroughly impractical that he was continually penniless, and therefore impossible.

"Listen," said she. "Do you know the sacrifice I have made for the privilege of becoming your wife? I have given up my girlhood. I have curtailed the most delightful part of a woman's life. I have bound myself with iron fetters to one man. I am a wife now. I can be a widow, but I can never be a girl again. I have lost my liberty. Do you realize the magnitude of my sacrifice, and do you realize how great a woman's love must be before she can bring herself to put her girlhood behind her? Do you realize what a woman gives to a man when she marries him? I suppose a man has kindred feelings. What are they? What sacrifices have you made for me?"

"I don't think I have made any sacrifices at all," he laughed. "I consider myself extremely fortunate. I never looked upon marriage as entailing any hardships or self-denial. I have only a lonesome bachelorhood to look back upon. I have a life of pleasant companionship with you to look forward to."

"That was a very pretty speech. You are already beginning to imbibe my ideas about love-making. I have lots of queer ideas about love and conjugal felicity, and my hobby is—confidence. I think we ought to tell each other everything, and I expect you to be just as interested in the price of eggs as I shall be in the doings of the Stock Exchange."

"You couldn't understand the workings of the market."

"It is your life work, and I shall be very much interested in it. I want you to make me understand it."

"You don't mean that husband and wife ought to tell each other everything?"

"Yes, I do."

"Does that include past, present and future?"

"Yes."

"Rather a large order, don't you think?"

"It was rather a large order when we took each other for better or worse. Oh, I don't know why I am talking this way! I think I want sympathy and love—real love."

"Why, my dearest! I love you!"

"Oh, yes, yes! In your way, but you don't know how. You love me better probably than I deserve, but you don't love me the way I want you to. I'll have to teach you, and I shall be perfectly miserable until you learn."

"Well, upon my word——"

"Don't be cross. Please don't be cross, and don't think me an unnatural girl for saying this. I'm just queer, and I've done something terrible to-day, and I want to tell you about it, but I'm frightened—horribly frightened. Oh, haven't you done something that you're ashamed to tell me; something perfectly awful, that will lessen the enormity of my mistake? I know you haven't, though. You are too calculating, too precise, and too cold."

He gave a curious little laugh.

"I think we are quits," he answered. "I did do something that I'm rather ashamed to tell you. It will probably seem a crime in your eyes."

"Oh, I am so glad! Don't tell me what it was. Let me confess first, and then if you don't make yours worse than mine I shall never forgive you. I'm going to be very brave and not spare myself one single bit. No, no; don't interrupt me. I want to get it over with. Jim Allen called at the house to-day and asked for me. You know about Jim and me, don't you?"

"I know you were said to be engaged to him."

"Well, he seemed to think that gave him a claim on my attention, for when I sent word down that I couldn't see him, he acted perfectly awfully and demanded that I should. He wrote a note on a card and said some absurdly wild things, and sent it up to me. I came down because I was afraid not to. He was awfully impertunate. He went all over our old affair, and called me heartless, and said he loved me, and asked me to go away with him right then, and cried when I wouldn't, and—and—do you want to hear any more?"

"Might as well have it all."

"I was sorry for him—Jim's a dear boy—so I told him I did love him, but I said I loved you more and thought I would be happier with you, and that we were better matched, and then I sent him away and went upstairs and cried—and—and that's all, but I think it's pretty bad. I oughtn't to have seen him or told him I loved him, but I do—just a little bit."

"H'm'm——"

"Don't look so queerly. Now tell me what you did."

"Oh, much the same thing. Edith Underhill was at the



"She was thinking of one who was poetical and fanciful enough to have overwhelmed her with love-making of her own kind."

reception to-day. I had about ten minutes' conversation with her just before I went upstairs to change my clothes. We were in that alcove under the stairs in the front hall. Edith is an impulsive little creature, and I suppose the thought that she wasn't to have any more chances at me made her a trifle blue. She cried, too, and I kissed her good-by. So you see I am worse than you are. I kissed another girl the day I married you."

There was a long silence in the carriage.

"Here we are at the station," he said, beginning to gather up bags and umbrellas.

"Oh, don't! Don't get out yet. I want to tell you something else. Go away," she cried to the coachman, who was approaching to open the carriage door. He gaped at her in astonishment, but obediently disappeared.

"I didn't tell you all," she said, talking very fast. "I told Jim I loved him better than any one else in the whole wide world, and I let him kiss me lots of times, and I said I didn't want to marry you, but it was too late to back out; and I meant what I said."

He shook his arm loose from her detaining grasp. "Damn your confidences," he remarked. "We shall have to hurry if we want to catch our train."

Bribing a Patriot.

Bribing a Patriot.

"It is curious that we should meet you every day," said Polly, rather coldly.

"It is a happy coincidence for me," I gasped.

Though you can see nearly a whole block up the avenue from our club windows, yet I'm always out of breath with the hurry of getting to the sidewalk in time to meet them. Polly and the Professor walk at such a virtuous pace. I hate a virtuous pace.

"Do you spend all of your time at the club?" inquired Polly, with just a glance at the pile of books under the Professor's arm.

"Nearly all," I answered, calmly, and then tried to think of something witty to say, which would show that I despised a model man like the Professor. Instead I only asked, "May I carry your books?"

"Oh, no, thank you," returned Polly, gently. "I'm afraid they are too heavy for you."

This sarcasm I would not notice. The habit of being sarcastic has grown on Polly since she has been attending classes at Columbia and has been walking down the avenue afternoons with the young Professor. If she were not the prettiest girl in the set, higher education would have ruined her chances of social success.

"We have been talking of an entirely new and un-hackneyed subject, namely, the war with Spain," said the Professor, in an elaborately jocose tone.

"The Professor and I agree beautifully," Polly hastened to add.

"Indeed? How very uninteresting," said I.

There was no need of asking what their convictions might be—I knew them.

"Why is it uninteresting for you to hear that we agree?" demanded Polly.

"I mean that it is much more exciting to differ."

"That depends," answered Polly, "on whether people are congenial or not. When two people are congenial, there is nothing more interesting than a discussion of subjects which they both think alike about. Isn't that true, Professor?"

"Yes, I believe you are right," said the Professor, smiling serenely. "It is a matter of intellectual affinity."

"The Professor has read a great deal—a very great deal—and he has been telling me what to read for myself. We have lovely talks."

"By the way," said I, in hope of changing the subject, "there goes Mrs. Van Cortlandt. Shall you be at her dance to-night?"



"Up the avenue from our club windows."

"I haven't time for such frivolous things," answered Polly, crushingly. Then she turned to the Professor. "Mr. Phillips, you must know, is one of our foolish jingoes. He belongs to Squadron X., and is dying to go to Cuba."

The Professor examined me as if I were a new and strange sort of bug. "Is there no hope of modifying Mr. Phillips's views?" he asked, in his condescending way.

"None," replied Polly, firmly.

"I am a person of strong convictions," I murmured, with an apologetic smile.

"In other words," Polly scornfully explained, "he is prejudiced and narrow. I have often tried to make him see things in a broader light, but he clings to his false theory of patriotism. I have explained to him your beautiful ideas about the universal brotherhood of man, but he always answers by making ferocious attacks on poor Spain."

"It is evident that he has not read anything on the subject," said the Professor. "I have noticed that such is generally the case with people who support our foolish Government."

"He reads the *World* and the *Journal*," said Polly.

"It is necessary to know all sides of the question," I murmured, with a sinking heart. There was no way out of it now.

"There is not, of course, more than one side to the question," observed the Professor, blandly. "All truly thoughtful people agree that it is an unjust war."

"Then all truly thoughtful people are no better than your mummies," I asserted, with some heat. His specialty is Egyptology.

"There is nothing personal in my remarks. I merely

wish to impress upon you the necessity for reading. Let me recommend to you Dr. Smithsonian's article in the last *Pillar*, called 'Why We Ought to Love Spain.' Also that little monograph of Professor Goodenough's, entitled 'The Futility of Patriotism.' Follow these up with some standard works on Political Economy, and I venture to predict that you will come to look at things in a new light."

"Yes, indeed you will," chimed in Polly.

"Unfortunately, I have so little time for reading," I replied, fuming over the Professor's impudence. "But I agree with you that it is necessary to be well informed. I have read the articles you mention, though of course they're rather trivial. The best of our modern political works are in German. Have you seen Gutenberg's 'Die Wahrheit,' or Marlitt's 'Neber Krieg'?"

"No, I haven't," said the Professor, in a doubtful tone, and eyeing me suspiciously.

"They are very strong works, and I advise you to get hold of them," I said, patronizing in my turn. "They will clear up several problems of the day for you."

"I will make a note of them," said the Professor, as he halted on the corner. "Unfortunately, we must part here."

The Professor lives in Fiftieth Street, I'm glad to say, while Polly's home is ten blocks further down. I wish he lived in Harlem!

"Be sure to bring around those books this evening," Polly called out, vivaciously.

"I'll not forget," he said, with needless fervor.

Polly and I walked on in silence for some time.

"I didn't know you were such a student," she said finally.

"A person can be a student and yet remain unlabeled," I answered loftily. "The true lover of books does not proclaim his tastes on the housetops."

"Would you advise me to inquire at the libraries for Gutenberg and Marlitt?"

"Well, no. Perhaps not. It is possible that those great works have not yet appeared in this country."

"Confess," said Polly, with heat, "that you made those names up. Confess that you are too lazy to read even the smallest bit of a pamphlet."

"I'll confess nothing of the kind," I answered. "You would tell that conceited prig of a Professor, if I should."

"He is not conceited," protested Polly. "He is only simple and frank. He is a very intelligent man."

"He is quite remarkable for a mummy," I condescended to assert. "Has more hair on his head, for one thing; their baldness is generally so disgusting."

"You are frivolous," said Polly, looking at me with scorn in her eyes. "Will you ever learn to be more serious?"

"I shall take my first lesson in the art of being serious to-night. We vote on volunteering for the war."

"Jack," exclaimed Polly, "you will surely never be so foolish as to enlist!"

"I surely shall. I'd rather die for my country than stay at home and die of rubbish talked by that infernal Professor."

"I wish you would be reasonable!" said Polly, and then she added, incoherently: "You will go and be shot, and think yourself very fine and patriotic, in spite of the fact that you would much better be doing your duty at home!"

"What is my duty at home?" I asked her, gloomily. "You won't even let me carry your books!"

"Your duty . . . mine is to do as much good with your wealth as you possibly can. Go down to the College Settlement, for instance, and let the Professor give you some idea of sociology."

"Thanks," I said. "I and my wealth are at my country's service, rather than at the Professor's."

"You are at the service of a false ideal!"

"You know my ideal," I answered, softly. "I told you who she was some time ago, and you've treated me unkindly ever since."

"Why don't you go away and leave me, then?" she queried, coldly.

"You know I can't. You know it, and you trample on me."

"It is good for you to be trampled on." She was standing above me on the steps of her house as she spoke thus cruelly. It did not seem likely she would ask me in. "Do you think," she added, "that I would marry an idle man who does nothing to elevate the world? Whose highest ambition is to kill his fellow-men?"

"You can marry a man who will do his best to be killed instead of to kill, if you choose," I answered listlessly.

"If you vote to-night for staying at home," said Polly, with an inscrutable look on her face, "I'll marry you."

"Truly?" I gasped, in astonishment.

"Truly," she replied, and vanished through the doorway.

From that time until the hour for cavalry drill arrived next evening I was a much distressed man. I voted for enlistment, after many struggles with conscience, but I wished all others to vote for staying at home. With a sinking heart I saw the men step forward, and I felt as



"Won't you come in, Jack dear?"

if their patriotic unanimity were the sentence of my doom.

The next afternoon, at the usual time, Polly and the Professor came swinging down the avenue. Polly looked rosy and serene. The Professor and I were despondent and glum.

"You look curiously downcast, Mr. Phillips," jeered Polly. "Are you trying to disguise your feelings of bloodthirsty joy?"

"I am too kind to show them to those who haven't my good luck. This war is going to lend variety to life for those of us who have to go."

"Mr. Phillips," said Polly, turning to the Professor, "looks upon the noble art of warfare precisely as he does a game of college football. But you needn't expect," she said to me, "that I shall wear violets and applaud you from the grand stand as I used to do."

"You might make me a pinball, and give me a tintype to carry next my heart," I suggested. "It's the traditional thing to do."

"Women are more strong-minded nowadays, I hope," sniffed Polly. "Men may be so foolish and wicked as to go to war, but women will not countenance them."

"I cannot understand the mad patriotism which seems to prevail even among intelligent people," said the Professor.

"I cannot understand why they hate poor dear Spain," declared Polly.

"It might be well to reserve endearing epithets for your own country," I said, irritably.

"I'm sure Miss Polly will never yield her reason and her sense of justice to a sentimental idea," blandly observed the Professor.

"No, indeed," said Polly.

"There ought not to be such a thing as love of country," continued the Professor. "The loftiest natures cherish only love of man."

"The fewer such lofty natures are, the better off we shall be," said I.

"They are very scarce in this country," said the Professor. "People here, I have observed, are strangely devoted to the Government, though its policy is weak and wrong."

"I trust that in your next incarnation," said I, "you will choose your native land with more discretion. Let it be something quite respectable."

"Speaking of re-incarnation," said the Professor, "among the ancient Egyptians——"

But I heard no more, for I devoted all my intelligence to counting off the streets we passed, and looking eagerly for Fiftieth.

At last we reached it, and the Professor with difficulty resurrected himself from the tomb of Rameses the Second and bade us a funereal farewell.

For some time after we left him Polly was silent and pensive.

"Well," she finally said, "why aren't you more enthusiastic? Doesn't the prospect of wearing a uniform and brandishing a sword fill your soul with joy?"

"You know how filled with joy I am," said I. "Incorruptibility is not its own reward, else I'd feel a little happier over giving up the bribe you offered me."

"Me! Offered you a bribe?" said Polly, in amazement. "I never did such a thing in my life!"

"But you said, you know, or at least you implied, you know, that——"

"Well, it wasn't a bribe," interrupted Polly, decisively. "And besides," she added, as she stood on her own doorstep once more, "even if it were a bribe, I would not pay it. Girls never do, you know."

"Then why," said I, "did you make that remarkable statement? It has kept me alternating between hope and despair for a whole day."

"I wished to break it to you gently," she said. "I wished to prepare you for hearing——"

"For hearing what?" I asked, impatiently, and thinking fearfully of the Professor.

"For hearing that I'd hate you if you wished to stay at home. That I'd hate you if you were such a coward as the Professor is."

The door opened and Polly started to enter the house. Then she stopped.

"Won't you come in, Jack dear?" she asked me, softly. And I, of course, went in.



Her First Dinner.

CHARACTERS:

MARIAN ASHHURST	<i>A Débutante</i>
MR. VAN LUYDAM BEEDAM	<i>A Society Man</i>
JACK	<i>Miss Ashhurst's Brother</i>
ALICE	<i>A Friend</i>

SCENE: *A coupé, in which the débutante, a bewildering mass of white satin and soft furs, is being driven rapidly to her destination.*

DÉBUTANTE (*in a funk*): Oh, dear, how cold my hands are! And my throat's so dry I have to swallow every five seconds. I've forgotten all Jack's advice, too. What shall I do? Good gracious, here we are! (*Breathes a silent prayer, grabs her gloves, fan, etc., frantically, and vanishes within a brilliantly lighted mansion.*)

LACKEY (*opening door*): Second floor front, please.

(*Débutante rushes past him up the stairs, fearful of being late, and hurries into the dressing-room. Perceives several figures in dainty gowns, but brushes by them oblivious of everything.*)

ALICE (*out two years*): Why, Marian, don't you know me? Is this your first dinner? Aren't you frightened? But no, you look as calm as an old campaigner. I want you to meet Miss —. (*Introduces her to the others.*)

DÉBUTANTE (*bowing and smiling nervously*): I am glad you think, Alice, I look calm. Frankly, it's all I can do to keep my teeth from chattering.

ALICE: What nonsense! But what are we waiting for? Let's go down. (*The débutante trails reluctantly in the rear.*)

VOICES: "How do you do?" "How are you?" "Let me present —." "Allow me to introduce," etc.

HOSTESS: Ah! Miss Ashhurst! So glad to see you! Allow me to present Mr. Van Luydam Beedam.

MISS ASHHURST (*who wonders vaguely why she thinks at that moment of Jack in one of his tempers*): How do you do?

MR. VAN L. B. : Miss Ashhurst, I believe I have the pleasure of taking you in to dinner.

(*Miss A. is saved the awkwardness of a reply by dinner being announced.*)

MR. VAN L. B. (*to himself*) : She's pretty, but, Jove ! I shall have to wring every word out of her. I know that sort. (*Aloud*) Let us consider, Miss Ashhurst, that we have discussed all the usual topics, the weather, the opera, the last new book, and let's promote ourselves to a more intimate understanding and discuss each other. We will each give a personal sketch. Now, you begin.

MISS A. (*whom nobody could put at her ease*) : No, please, I can't, really ; you begin. (*Finds that she is the last girl to draw off her gloves, and tugs away frantically.*)

MR. VAN L. B. (*resignedly*) : Well, I'll account for myself, so as to give you courage. I am nothing if not commonplace. I live in a most respectable quarter of the town with a most unimpeachable parent, and all my surroundings from childhood have been of an extreme propriety and spotless virtue.

MISS A. (*to herself*) : Heavens ! I've used some other fork instead of the oyster fork ! What shall I do ? I'm sure he saw it. (*Aloud*) Tell me some more—*do*.

MR. VAN L. B. (*flattered*) : Such environments ought to have been my ruin, but I was far too lazy, and I am at present merely a harmless butterfly.

(*Looks at his companion and encounters a stony stare of horror. To himself*) : What can be the matter with her ? Is she ill ? (*Goes on talking, bravely, if disconnectedly.*)

MISS A. (*to herself*) : What is that creeping up my neck ? (*Follows it cautiously with her hand, and encounters an atom of an insect. Why did she wear those violets ?*)

MR. VAN L. B. (*to himself*) : Thank heaven, she has taken off that look ! (*Aloud*) Now, really, it is your turn.



"I am glad you think, Alice, I look calm."

MISS A. (*lying recklessly*): I've been out three years. I used to be fearfully nervous and easily rattled, but I have gotten over that entirely. (*Again that feeling on her neck. It can't be—but yes, it is!*)

MR. VAN L. B. (*to himself*): Most extraordinary young person. There's that expression again. (*Aloud*) Please go on; you're doing finely.

MISS A. (*seizing opportunity, when her neighbor is helping himself to something, to take off her violets and drop them under the table.*)

MR. VAN L. B. (*turning*): Why, Miss Ashhurst, where are your violets?

MISS A. (*blushing*): They were faded, so I threw them away.

MR. VAN L. B. (*to himself*): That's a lie. (*Aloud*) Excuse me for being personal, Miss Ashhurst, but you have eaten absolutely nothing.

MISS A. (*who shivers at the mere mention of food*): What an idea! I've eaten enormously.

MR. VAN L. B. (*to himself*): Jove! That's another. (*Aloud*) Aren't you going to throw any more light on your character?

MISS A.: No; really, there is nothing else to tell. (*To herself*) Oh! where is my slipper? I kicked it off because it hurt, and now I can't find it. (*Peers desperately under the table*)

MR. VAN L. B.: Have you dropped your glove or anything? Let me get it. (*Stoops down.*)

MISS ASHHURST (*to herself*): He must not find it! (*Aloud*) No, indeed, here they both are. (*Holds her gloves up eagerly.*)

(*She sees her hostess give the signal for departure. She must conceal her loss. Nods adieu to Mr. Van L. B., and finds out to her cost that there is a difference between a French heel and no slipper.*)



"I believe I have the pleasure."



"The rigid figure of the butler."

Her First Dinner.

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MR. VAN L. B. (*to himself, as he lights a cigar and sighs contentedly*): I wonder if that walk of hers is natural, or cultivated?

SCENE: *The Drawing-room.*

The gentlemen have joined the ladies, and the talk flows on smoothly. The door is opened, and on the threshold appears the rigid figure of the butler, bearing a tray on which a white satin slipper (surely a number five!) rests conspicuously. Tableau.

SCENE: *Miss Ashhurst's Home.* TIME: *Midnight.*

MRS. ASHHURST (*comforting a weeping figure*): Don't cry, Marian. The first plunge is always the coldest.

MISS ASHHURST (*between sobs*): Oh—mummie—is there—are there—any biscuits—in—the house?

CURTAIN.



A Romance of Two Legs.

A Romance of Two Legs.



WHAT!" roared Mr. Graves, in a passion. "Do you mean to say, sir, that that is my—my—my limb in that bottle?"

"Certainly," rejoined the physician, coolly, turning the jar a little more to the light; "and a remarkably fine specimen it is."

"But it is an outrage. Nay, sir, it is positively indecent! To think of a part of my body being on exhibition in such a shameless fashion! I'll have you arrested, sir."

The doctor gave a quiet chuckle, and placed the offending jar on a shelf in a closet.

"Calm yourself, Mr. Graves. It is not on exhibition. At least, not to the general public. A very neat job, that amputation. I have known but one other person of your years that recovered so quickly. Here is the limb of that person," bringing forward a jar which contained a smaller, more daintily-formed leg.

"But—but that belongs to a lady!" gasped Mr. Graves, much scandalized, his face becoming suffused with color.

"Certainly. Miss Cooper—Miss Patience Cooper, a newcomer. Beautiful operations, both of them." He arose, closed the closet door and locked it.

"But, doctor, this is monstrous!" exclaimed the excited gentleman. "Cut off a person's limb for every Tom.

Dick and Harry to look at? I tell you that it is monstrous! I'll have the law on you, sir," and he strode angrily from the room, followed by a shout of laughter from the doctor. True to his word, Mr. Graves consulted several lawyers. All agreed, however, that the physician was justified in retaining the leg as a specimen if he so desired. Disgusted and irritated at the result, he returned to his room and pondered long and deeply.

"I won't have it!" he exclaimed at last, aloud. "Law or no law, that doctor shall not have that limb! No, sir; not if I have to steal it. Ah!"

An idea struck him. Steal it! The very thing. He would watch his opportunity. He would have that leg. Did it not belong to him? Gloating in anticipation over the defeat of the doctor, he retired.

For several days Mr. Graves refrained from visiting the physician's office. One morning, as he was walking down the street, the doctor passed him.

"Whither so fast?" inquired Mr. Graves, facetiously.

"To a tiresome patient," answered the doctor, affably, glad that Mr. Graves had recovered his good humor. "Not a jolly, good fellow, as you were, Mr. Graves."

"Thank you," and Mr. Graves smiled blandly.

The doctor passed on. Here was his chance. He sauntered slowly along until the physician was out of sight; then his manner changed, and he was all alertness. Turning in the direction of the doctor's office, he walked as rapidly as his artificial limb would permit towards it. As he had expected, the door was unlocked. Entering, he glanced around. The room was empty. Chuckling at his good luck, he crossed to the closet. Oh, joy! The key was in the lock. He had just seized it when he heard



"Not a jolly, good fellow, as you were, Mr. Graves."

steps approaching. With an exclamation of impatience he snatched up a newspaper, and, hurriedly opening the door, grabbed the first jar, enveloping it in paper as he did so. The steps came nearer. Some one was certainly coming through the hall to the office. It took Mr. Graves but a second to hastily close the closet door, but in doing so the key fell to the floor. Seating himself, he tried to look composed.

A lady entered. Her manner was hurried. She stopped short when she saw Mr. Graves, and colored furiously.

"The doctor," she murmured, confusedly. "I—I thought——"

"He is out," and Mr. Graves became calm as he noted her confusion, and spoke suavely. He was always suave to ladies, and this one, though her hair was plenteously streaked with gray, and she was plainly elderly, had a sweet face and an appealing way that went straight to his heart.

"Do you think he will be long, sir?"

"I don't know, I am sure. I hope not, for your sake."

"I—I think I'll wait, then," and she sat down timidly.

As she passed to a chair, Mr. Graves noticed that she walked with a slight limp.

"Then I'll wait with you," he said, gallantly.

"Oh, don't! That is—would you mind very much not to?" exclaimed the lady, in an agitated manner. "Oh, what am I saying! Please, please go away."

"All right, ma'am." Mr. Graves arose with dignity. His vanity was hurt, for he had been pleased with her appearance. "I meant no offense. Good morning."

"Good morning," answered she, in such a wistful way that he forgave her rudeness on the spot, and smiled reassuringly at her as he left. Exulting at his success, he reached his room.

"Now, what shall I do with it?" he murmured, as he placed it on the table. "'A remarkably fine specimen,' the doctor said. No doubt, no doubt. Theodore Graves always could give points to an Apollo. I'll take a good look at it." So saying, he raised the curtain, letting a flood of sunlight into the room, and unwrapped the jar.



"She stopped short when she saw Mr. Graves, and colored furiously."

Good heavens! What was this? Surely that was not his leg? Mr. Graves looked closer, and then fell back helplessly into a chair. He had taken the wrong jar.

Long he sat there, and gazed stupidly at the thing. What should he do? It would never do in the world for it to stay in his room. What if some one should find it

there? And he a respectable, middle-aged bachelor! Full of agony at the thought, he started up, and concealed it hastily in his wardrobe. Not until the key was turned did he breathe easily. The thing must be returned; but how? At length he determined upon a bold move. He would return it that night and get his own.

At midnight a dark figure might have been seen gliding along the village streets in the direction of the doctor's office. It was Mr. Graves. The night was beautiful. The moon shone brightly, but Mr. Graves did not pause to note its beauty. No watch was kept in the peaceful village, and the inhabitants had long since retired to rest, but he proceeded with caution.

The office was in a low, one-story building, opening directly on the main street. In the rear was a window, and to this he made his way.

The window, with the carelessness that characterizes the dwellers of rural communities, had been left unlocked. It was an easy matter to raise it and crawl inside, but to the law-abiding Mr. Graves the thing seemed fraught with risk and danger, so that it was some little time before the feat was accomplished. At last it was done. Breathless and triumphant, he placed the jar on the table and sank into a chair to recover himself.

At this moment there was a grating in the lock of the outside door. Great heavens! Could any one be coming? What would be thought should he be found there at that hour of the night? Mr. Graves glanced around wildly for a place of concealment. The table! He dodged under it just as the door opened and a dark figure entered.

It moved cautiously. The door was closed gently, and then the figure glided quietly across the door to the



"It was an easy matter to raise it and crawl inside."

closet, unmindful of the open window. Mr. Graves almost gasped aloud in his surprise. It was a woman.

The woman tried the closet door gently, and then with more force, but it did not yield to her efforts. With a moan she sank into a chair and exclaimed, despairingly:

"Why didn't I think of that! It's locked! What shall I do?"

The voice went through Mr. Graves like an electric shock. It was that of the lady whom he had met in the morning. A light broke in upon his mind. It was—it must be—Miss Patience Cooper, bound upon the same errand as he.

"Ma'am," said Mr. Graves, softly, looking out from under the table.

The lady uttered a slight scream and arose in alarm.

"Don't be afraid, ma'am; it's only me," and Mr. Graves issued from his place of concealment as gracefully as possible, sublimely unconscious of that slip in grammar. "Perhaps we can help each other."

The lady was silent from astonishment. Mr. Graves advanced boldly to the closet, and, producing a screw-driver from his pocket, proceeded to remove the lock with the air of a professional burglar.

"There!" he said, in a sepulchral whisper, opening the door with a flourish. "Now we must be quick."

He took down the other jar, and placed it beside the first one.

"This is your—your——" Mr. Graves paused in some embarrassment, and then went on boldly as he unwrapped the jar. "This is what you came for, isn't it?"

"Ye-es," assented the lady, timidly. "Is—is—does that one belong to you?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Then you must be Mr. Graves."

"Graves, yes. Theodore Graves, at your service. And you are Miss Cooper?"

The lady bowed, and then said in a low tone:

"What must you think of me, Mr. Graves, coming here like a thief? But I could not bear the idea of my—my——" She paused.



"We two can never be strangers."

"Certainly not," answered Mr. Graves, brusquely. "Your feelings do you credit, ma'am. Was that your errand here this morning?"

"Yes; but I was interrupted before I could make any search. It was yours, too, wasn't it?"

"Yes; but I got the wrong jar, and had to return it. Now we must hasten."

Each took a jar, and, forgetting the window, passed out through the door.

"How did you get the key?" whispered Mr. Graves, his caution returning as soon as they were outside.

"I slipped it out of the doctor's pocket to-day when he came to see a friend who was ill," returned Miss Cooper, in the same tone. Mr. Graves gazed at her in admiration.

"What shall we do with it?" asked she.

"Leave it in the lock," answered he, with sudden boldness. Then, like two thieves, they stole away together.

"What shall we do with these things, now that we have them?" queried Mr. Graves when they were at a safe distance.

"I shall bury mine," said Miss Cooper, softly.

"The very thing!" ejaculated he again, with admiration. "Together let us do it. To-night; but where?"

"In my garden," answered Miss Patience, who had evidently thought of everything beforehand.

Out from the village a short distance was the little cottage where Miss Cooper resided, and to this they repaired. Miss Patience produced a spade from the barn, and Mr. Graves manfully dug the grave. Then the two jars were deposited side by side, the earth filled in and patted down until even with the surface. Then Mr. Graves turned towards her.

"Seems like we ought to have a prayer or something," he remarked in subdued tones. "Shall we?"

"Oh, no, no!" and Miss Patience shivered a little. "It wouldn't be right, and both of us here in the flesh, would it?"

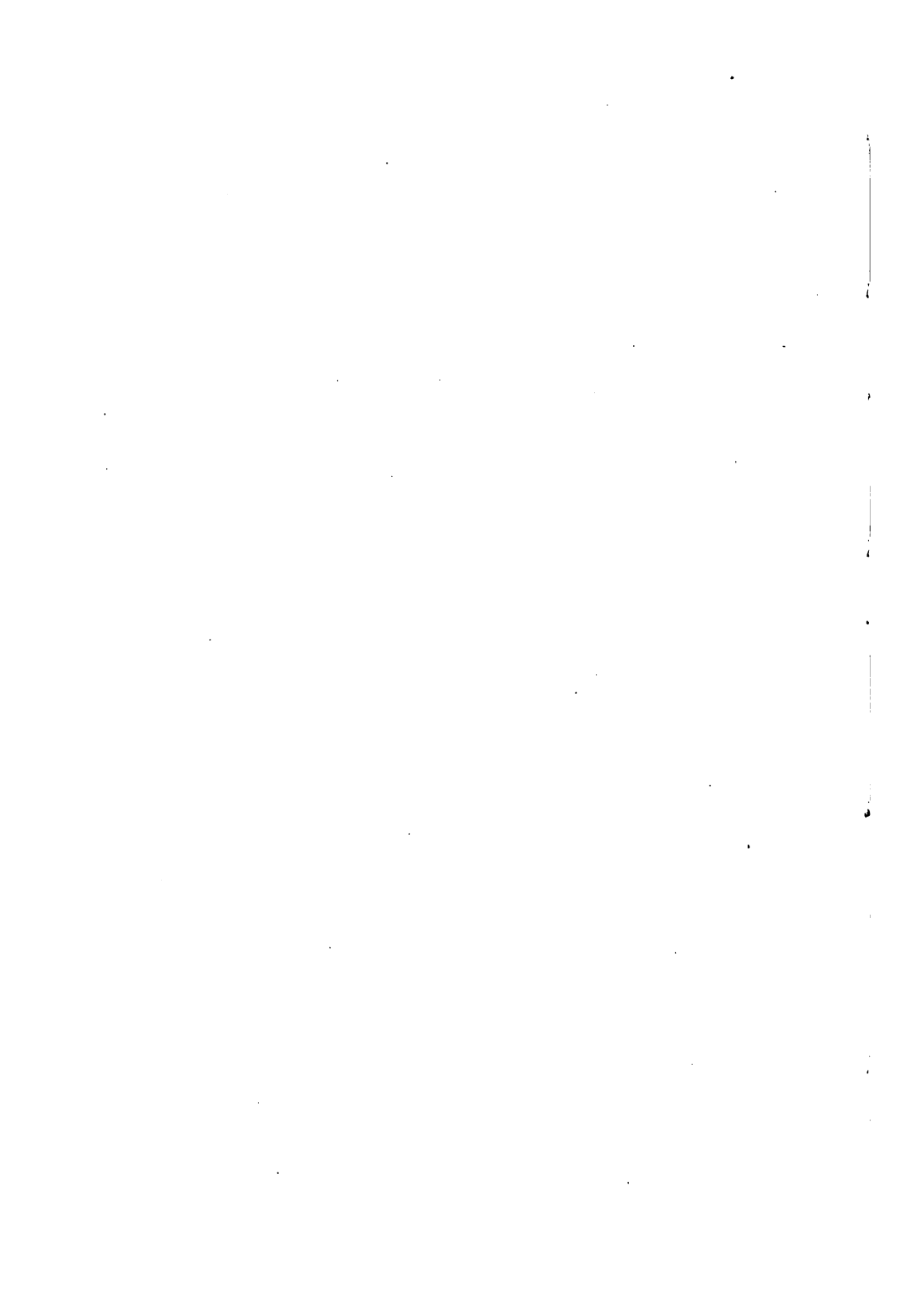
"Miss Patience," and Mr. Graves threw down the spade and turned to her with sudden determination, "we two can never be strangers again. After all that has passed; with this guilty secret between us——" He paused. Guilty secret was good. He had not known before his capacity for mystery, and then resumed pompously: "This guilty bond—this crime, I might almost say; we belong to each other. A part of us is buried in the same grave. The rest should be united also. Will you marry me, Miss Patience?"

Miss Cooper trembled, but said faintly, "You don't know me, Mr. Graves."

"Yes, I do. I know that you have the same sympathies and feelings as myself. I liked you this morning, and this gives us to each other. Doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Miss Patience.

At the wedding, two weeks later, the doctor congratulated them with a twinkle in his eye. "Graves, you thief," he said, roguishly, "when am I to be paid for my specimens?"



How She Took It.

How She Took It.

"I acknowledge that I belong to an inferior sex."

There are times in every man's life when, worn out with the strife, he momentarily gives up the battle and utterly capitulates. This is in great part due to the secret, sneaking feeling that by suddenly throwing himself on the mercy of his opposite, by giving up everything, he may take her off her guard, and gain more in the end than by continuing to wage an unequal warfare.

It was this feeling that prompted Witherby to speak as he did.

"Yes," he continued, "while it is not easy for me to say so, I must acknowledge that it is true. When I opened my mail this morning and saw the number and numerical strength of the bills you had contracted last month, not knowing about them before, I was taken off my feet, and no doubt said many things to you that were cruel and unjust. Then it was that you reminded me of the promises and hopes I had given you before our marriage, and of the wholly inadequate manner with which they have been fulfilled. If, as you say, my income is not sufficient to allow you the common necessities of life, then I am alone to blame, and it is not what you were led to expect. It is not always possible for a man to appreciate the broader views of life that a woman takes, or to understand all of the higher motives that actuate her in her sphere. Leading the narrow and circumscribed existence that I do, working all day in a poorly ventilated office, coming in contact with no broadening



"My dear, it is all my fault."

influences, mingling only with men of my own stamp, and arriving home at night too tired to receive from your presence that higher culture which you possess, it is no wonder that I often fail to understand or appreciate your aims and desires. I have no time to go to authors' readings, lectures, play golf, attend five-o'clock teas, or read aloud, and I know but too well that these things make up the difference which puts your sex on the higher plane. In my small way, I have endeavored to manage my income so that it might meet our wants without my getting into debt, and my timid nature has no doubt been unable to cope with the situation. Had I your mental grasp, I should have arisen to every emergency. My dear, it is all my fault. We men are not equal to you women, and we may as well say so. You have more opportunity, and naturally know more about these things. I know now and feel most deeply that I am your inferior and can only ask you to forgive me if I have offended you. There—are you satisfied?"

Mrs. Witherby eyed her penitent and color-struck husband for a moment with a look of mild displeasure.

"I suppose," she said sternly, "that I shall have to be satisfied; but consider how much better it would have been, my dear, if you had only explained this before."

*A Devotee to the
Higher Culture.*

A Devotee to the Higher Culture.

He was waiting for her when she returned from her club.

He watched her coming down the street with three other fair devotees, and, unseen, he smiled down on them as they stood on the broad pavement, chatting in their eager, girlish voices, eyes shining with excitement and cheeks glowing.

It must have been an unusually interesting meeting. Twice, at least, she essayed to leave them and was drawn back, and the busy hum continued. Then, finally, with a wave of her hand, she ran lightly up the steps, and he could hear her voice in the hall below.

It was some moments before she entered, and then the fire had died from her eyes, though her color still remained.

She gave him her hand somewhat coldly.

"No! you mustn't," she expostulated, and drew back hastily, as he bent to kiss her. "Well, only this once, anyway."

"Like Rip Van Winkle," he laughed. "But what is it, dear? Have I offended you? Are——"

"No," she interrupted him, seating herself at a safe distance and toying with a book. "I—that is, we girls," confusedly.

"Aha!" he smiled, and his brows relaxed. "I see; you maidens of the Higher Culture are going to rise superior to the amenities of life. As the boys would say, you are going to 'swear off.'"

"Yes," she replied, her dimples returning; "you don't put it nicely, but I'm glad you understand. You see, Madame gave us a very fine talk to-day about keeping ourselves superior to these—these familiarities," hesitatingly.

"Kissing, for instance," he suggested.

"Yes," consciously, "and everything of that kind. She says that we ought to be so interested in other things, higher things—the culture of the inmost—striving after the perfection of the intellectual and spiritual—that we shall have no thought of these things."

Her eyes had a far-away expression.

"It should be our mission," she continued, gravely referring to her tiny chatelaine tablets, "to create an atmosphere of the purely intellectual, the metaphysical; to subdue the natural and relegate it to the lower planes of existence."

"Would you relegate us men to those same lower planes?" he asked, dubiously.

"Certainly not!" she replied, emphatically. "A man's mind, with its force and creative power, is a necessary adjunct to the completeness of the whole. Men and women should meet on a wholly metaphysical plane, and should admire each other for qualities of mind, and that subtle something yet undetermined which we call sphere."

"Would you believe in marriage?" meekly.

"Oh, yes!" brightly. "Though, of course, when this order of things has become established there will be fewer marriages, for what we now call love can so seldom bear the clear inspection of our higher culture that the custom may gradually die away. Yet those marriages that will then be made will be ideal, the union of mind and mind, a union that makes completeness, and leaves no void."



"It should be our mission to create an atmosphere of the purely intellectual."



"Aren't you going to kiss me good-by?"

A suppressed exclamation on his part, dignified silence on hers.

"If I conclude rightly," he said, with utmost gravity, "we are to live simply in the intellectual. That being the case, I'm not to kiss you, or"—a warning glance from her—"or tell you that you're pretty, or anything of the kind, because that would drag you back to the natural. Is that correct?" a searching glance.

"Yes—only, of course, you're to be nice to me."

"All right," cheerfully. "It's an excellent plan, no doubt, when you're used to it," and he plunged into an animated exposition on telepathy. "We've had a very nice afternoon," he said, as he arose to go.

His hand was on the door, and she was close beside him.

"Good-night," he said, and closed the door gently, then paused for an instant. There was a rustle of skirts and a soft odor of violets.

"Aren't you going to kiss me good-by?" she demanded



A Fire-Light Mirage.

It was the night of the 14th of February. The air was thick with snow, and thousands of Loves were whirling through it, bringing in the accounts of the year for the great Bowman's ledger.

In the apartments of Archibald Reed all was still except for the snapping of the cannel coal in the fire on the generous hearth of the sitting-room. It was a typical bachelor's apartment, charming with rich-toned rugs, huge easy chairs, trophies of sport, guns, foils, rods and golf clubs, and pictures and books in every available spot. On the mantel-piece, tempering the bric-à-brac, were the photographs of half a dozen beautiful women, friends and celebrities. One of them, looking as if it were photographed from a painting, unlike the others, was unsigned.

Into the quiet of the room fluttered a Love. He glanced about eagerly, but his impression was evidently disappointing. As his gaze fell on the photographs massed together, he shrugged his shoulders. "All on a level," he muttered, and turned to the sleeping apartment. He was gone but a moment, returning with a perceptibly lengthened countenance. "One of the incorrigibles," he grumbled; "horses and dogs, and no time for a sweetheart." Then he went over and sat at the open desk beneath the lamplight, and drew out the papers from several pigeon-holes. "Nothing but bills," he sighed; "pigeon-holes ought to hold love letters, not bills." The warmth of the room was making him sleepy.

"Yet pigeons have bills"—he dropped his head on the blotting-pad, and in a moment would have been fast asleep had not another Love just then arrived.

"Hello, Little Flame; have you finished here?"

The small head bobbed up from the desk.

"Is that you, Chappie?" he yawned, shaking off his drowsiness. "Finished? Almost—not quite; but there is scarcely anything to do."

"My dear boy"—the new arrival perched himself on the arm of his chair—"do you know that this is the dwelling-place of the greatest heart-breaker in town?"

"Doesn't look it."

"Well, it is true, nevertheless, and the governor sent me to help you out, fearing you would not get through before midnight. Let us see what is here."

He leaned forward, and turned over the papers and bills tumbled carelessly together in the large, open compartment of the desk. He was rewarded by finding three notes. "This may be something." He scanned the envelopes critically, then shook his head. "All mailed to-day, and each in a different handwriting." He opened the first, glancing rapidly through it.

"Sent her a ruby heart-pin and a bunch of violets; that sounds encouraging." Then he opened the second. "Wants to thank him for his exquisite violets and the charming ruby heart-pin. Same to both of them—there is sentiment for you."

Little Flame had been reading the last. He looked up dolefully. "Sends the pin back, but will keep the violets that she loves."

Chappie struck his small fist on the arm of the chair and burst into laughter that was bewilderingly sweet, yet had something of the wicked hum of a bowstring in it.

"The lazy beggar!" he cried. "He wouldn't even take the trouble to pick out different gifts for them. No more sentiment than a hedgehog—not as much as a porcupine."

They opened the drawers of the desk, and all the cupboards, even a secret panel that Archibald, who had inherited the desk, knew nothing about; but Little Flame was famous for finding such nooks. Not another line, not a picture, not a flower, ribbon, nor tender memento of any sort could be discovered. Chappie was chuckling still.

"Doesn't keep a thing; that is the way to do it. He is not going to worry himself with trifles, and get heart-ache some day, stumbling over forgotten things."

"I don't believe he has a heart," groaned Little Flame. "A pretty report this will make."

Chappie was surveying the room with an experienced eye. "What about those photographs?" he asked. "Has he any more?"

"Nothing but racehorses in his sleeping-room, and only those you see here, all lined up together. Can you make anything of that?"

Chappie shook his head. "Not unless they will talk a bit."

He jumped from the arm of the chair and fluttered over to the fire. There was a big easy-chair in front of it, and here he ensconced himself. The chair was of red velvet; the firelight fell warmly upon it and enveloped Chappie in a rosy glow.

He half shut his lids and looked up; between the long lashes his eyes gleamed like purple sapphires. Little Flame crept closer, snuggled down on the hearth rug and watched.

Chappie still kept his eyes upon the pictures and

hummed a little tune; it was an air from the sound waves of a butterfly hovering over a rose, and his voice was like a harp struck softly. The pictures seemed to breathe under its spell, and Chappie looked innocently away from them into the fire.

The eyes of the photographs were riveted upon him, as love will hold a woman's eyes.

"I should put Archie Reed down as a cad," he murmured to Little Flame, shading his eyes a moment to wink at him.

"That is a very sweeping term," answered Little Flame, sitting up very straight, while curbing a desire to roll on the hearth rug. "It can mean almost anything unpleasant."

The profile picture of a woman in a big hat turned. She was not so pretty full face, and Chappie had noted out of a corner of his eye the struggle it had been for her to make up her mind to turn.

"You may call him a cad if you like," she answered, her voice clear and carrying, "but he is one of the jolliest, sweetest tempered men in the world, ready for anything, and an all-round good fellow."

"You think that, because he admires your profession—or rather, *the* profession," said Chappie, nudging Little Flame with his rose-leaf toes.

"He is awfully good to us." A wide-eyed girl was talking. "It is all smooth enough sailing now, since I have the right play to star in; but last year, when I was ill, he would have married me just to take care of me, if I would have let him." She gave a half-pathetic laugh. "He has been so grateful to me ever since for not letting him that it is a bit trying; but I knew he never really cared."

"I think it is not so much the stage that he is fond of as music." The speaker was tall and willowy, gowned in filmy black, with straight features and dark masses of wavy hair caught with a crescent.

"Pooh!" said the profile, posed sideways again. "He can't turn a tune."



"The new arrival perched himself on the arm of his chair."

"That doesn't constitute feeling for music," the Diana-like one continued. "It is a passion with him, deeper than the mere desire to excel in it himself. I see it when I play for him;" her eyes grew black and dreamy. "He seems to feel it in every nerve, perfectly happy, perfectly content while he can listen."

A fresh, clever-looking woman here broke in. "I should say he cared more for books than music," she said. "He has chosen so many charming ones for me, and has talked to me about so many more. I feel quite afraid of him at times, he seems so learned."

"It is my opinion that he doesn't honestly care a rap about either." This was from a smart-looking girl in a riding habit, and she struck her boot impatiently with a crop as she spoke. "Give him a fit horse and the dew on the ground of a fall morning, and he'd take a piano and a hedge of books on the other side for a chance to be off with us." She raised her hand and gave a soft halloo, and the hound at her feet shivered in his sleep.

"He is selfish and cold-hearted, whatever his tastes," said a quiet-looking girl beside her. "I would not trust him a moment, nor believe one word he might say, and I know what I am talking about." Her voice was cold but well modulated, and as she finished she drew her thin lips a little tighter together and looked around. She caught the eye of the girl in the picture like a painting, and the girl regarded her appealingly. The girl was in a ball gown, with roses in her hands, looking with clear eyes out upon the world that seemed a happy one to her.

"Don't—please don't say that!" Her manner was sweet and winning as she spoke. "I am sure you are wrong; how can he be what you say he is, when he brings out all that is best and truest in those he talks to? I have not known him so long, but——"

The thin lips opened again. "When you have known him a little longer you will find out."

A ship's clock, the only timepiece in the apartment, struck eight bells.

"Hush!" said Chappie to the photographs, and he and Little Flame scurried from the room.



"That of the girl with the roses he looked at first."

A valet entered, freshened the fire and went away. At half-past twelve Reed came home. He was covered with snow. When he had taken off his things he sent his man away and sat down by the fire.

He looked into it a long while, then he raised his eyes to the photographs above him. He stood up and gathered them in his hands. That of the girl with the roses he looked at first, then put it one side. The others he took one by one, scrutinized each carefully, and when he had done, laid it gently on the flames.

When they were gone he took that of the girl with the roses once more, and, touching it lightly with his lips, replaced it on the mantel-piece. Still standing, he looked long and tenderly down upon it. "Good-night, little girl," he whispered; "you have made a better man of me already, and June is a long way off."

The Scar on the Flank.

The Scar on the Flank.



THIS is a love story without the love, and it is not at all extraordinary, for there are many of the sort untold. Patrick Magarvey, Van Diller's new coachman, is responsible for it. I borrowed him from Van Diller one morning because he was accounted a marvelous horse-barber, and I am very particular as to the clipping of my horses. Then, to make a sure thing doubly certain, I remained with him while he did the work, and we became quite well acquainted.

Brown Bess, my favorite mare, has a scar upon her flank. It was there when she came into my possession, and I had often wondered how she got it. It was the only thing that marred the beauty of the animal.

After a time Mr. Magarvey caught sight of this scar, and the clippers ceased to work. He started as if shocked. Then he gave vent to a long whistle that indicated astonishment, and I questioned him without more ado.

"Know thot scar, sor?" said he. "Phew! Would Oi know me brother Moike if he wor to pop up through a knothole in the flure? Sure, sor, Oi remimber the toime the little beauty gets thot put onty her as if it 'twor to-morry. 'Twor foive years ago comin' Siptimber first. She wor a three-year-owld thin, and the proide av owld George Grimley's heart, up in Ontario County, where Oi wor workin' in thim days. O moy, O moy!"

"Owld Grimley's said many the toime thot the mare wor filled wid bitter blood than fure-thirds av the swills thot visited the place ivery day or three in the year, and Oi'm thinkin' mesilf thot he towld the truth, for there comes a toime, sor, whin the little darlin's bradin' wor put 'longside thot av a ginuwine aristocrat, and she wins the race aisy.

"Oi'm not remimberin' now what wor goin' on thin, but 'twor a proivate theatricke, or somethin' av the soort, wid a scamper on hoorseback owver the hills in the mornin', and a great roide to the hounds whin the last day wor come, and 'twor moighty busy we wor in the stables, for the ladies and gintlemen wor widout mercy in their hearts or judgment in their hids.

"Did yez iver notice, sor, thot whin folks gets too gay thot a flood av tears comes soon after? Will, sor, some av thot party passed the limit av discretion one day, and the wailin' and lamentation thot follies wor thicker than mosquitoes in a swamp. 'Twor not me thot wor hilpin' it, though, Oi'm tillin' yez, for, be the grace av the Virgin, Oi'm knowin' a thing or two thot's makin' me smoile contented loike thot 'tis as 'tis.

"There wor a long-ligged skoonk in the party thot come whin yez called Reginald. Oi'm not tillin' yez the other name av him, for Oi'm thinkin' 'twould do no good. And he wor swate on Blanche, the little daughter av owld Grimley, her thot wor gradiated from shoort drisses long after Biss here wor dropped onty the turf av this iligant world. She wor a paich av a girl, the oyes av her snappy and dreamy be spills, and thin agin mixed, which wor foine to look at. And the father av her wor troyin' hard to be a mother to her and raise hoorses at the same toime, and he foinds the hands av him hivvy wid work aven whin he's nothin' to do, Oi'm tillin' yez.

"Riginald wor not the ownly one thot wor swate on the girl, aither. She wor one av thim craitures thot draws min loike a nap on the grass draws floies, and every felly in the party had troied to win the affictions av her and been dropped soft and gintle, loike a brick goes inty a mortar-box—all ixcept two, Riginald and a young buck disguoised wid the name av Smith, who wor an owld friend av the fam'ly on his father's soide, and wor, Oi could see, will looked upon by owld Grimley.

"For some raison, known ownly to the girl (and shewor moighty ignorant on the point, too, just b'twane yez and me, sor), she gives thim two incouragement; thot is, she don't drop thim loike the others, and av coorse after a toime bad falin's begins to show. They gets very poo-loite and corjul, and thot, sor, whin carried to ixcess in the bist soociety, manes murder many the toime.

"Riginald wor the richer av the two. Sure, he'd a crist on the dog-cart av him thot he'd paid a good sum for, and 'twor very proud he wor av the same, it showin' him to have blood in him thot many years ago had kilt innocent children and stowl milons and raised the divil wid moorality intoirely. Av coorse, 'twor a loie, his havin' the blood, but 'twor a good guiss av the felly thot sills him the roights to it. Oi'm hearin', too, thot he's the pictures av some av thim owld duffers hung on the walls av his apartments, whoile the loikeness av his owld grandfather's hung tinderly in the bottom av an owld trunk under the back stairs.

"Smith sticks to his own ancistors, and for thot raison Oi favors him in the foight thot's on for the girl. He wor a strappin' youngster, wid whoite hair and black eyes—as black, sor, as thim yez have in your own hid—

and a plisent twist av the tongue whin talkin' wid me which the other has not, bein' owverbearin' and per-
ductive av wicked thoughts in me moind, that wor on a
hair-trigger in thim days, and 'tis but little bitter now.
Bowth has hoorses in the stables, too, and Oi judges thim
be thim. Riginald's wor a big bay wid the funny busi-
ness all knocked out av him. Sure he wor the littlest big
hoorse Oi iver saw, startin' and trimblin' whin yez goes
near him, 'loike the woife av his owner will be doin','
thinks Oi, 'if she's strong as a hoorse and don't doie
before the chronic trimbles sits in.' Smith's hoorse wor
diffrunt. He wor loike Smith, ownly more cowloike
and gintle, but not much, and whin yez punches him in
the stall he turns the oyes av him on yez and troies to
say a verse from Scripture, turnin' the other soide av him
to be punched.

"On the day av the theatrickle, or whatever 'twas, the
whole party gets out early in the moornin', and again
just befor dinner, havin' the ixcoitement on them and
cravin' activity. Mowst av thim gets back betoimes, but
two av thim's missin', and thim two wor Riginald and
the girl. They takes a new road, the others says, manin'
to get home first; but it gets dark and toime for the doin's
to begin, and they're not home first yet; and Oi'm seein'
a troubled look in the oyes av the owld man, and Smith
walks around the place loike a felly wid a bad drame.

"Thin av a sudden they comes on a did walk, Riginald
ladin' his hoorse, thot limps loike a dishrag, and the girl
follyin'. A great shout goes up—Smith not givin' it—and
they hustles inty the house to get riddy for what they're
callin' the preformance. Riginald's hoorse goes lame,
they said, and that howlds thim back. Oi looks the baste
owver whin Oi'm alone, and Oi'm seein' thot he's not



"They sittin' on the grane banks av a brook."

bad hurt, nadin' a bit av a band about the lig and rist
for a toime, but Oi'm knowin' down in meself thot the
hurt wor no accident. Later Oi learns thot Riginald

tills the girl, after monkeyin' wid the animal's lig, thot they'll be havin' to iit him rist a bit, and thin makes love to her wid no Smiths to interfere, they sittin' on the grane banks av a brook whoile the hoorses nibbles the grass behoind thim.

"Nothin' comes av it? Oh, no, sor; nothin' comes av it; but 'tis moighty narrie is the 'scape the girl has—narrie, sor, as the idge av an Oirish wit.

"Oi wor sittin' in me room in the stables thot noight wid no loight, thinkin' av a pair of blue oyes thot wor workin' thimsilves to a blister in the kitchen av a brownstone house in town, and drammin' av the lakes av Killarney, thot be shuttin' me oyewinkers down betwane me oyes and the moon Oi can see plain, whin Oi hears voices stilthily walkin' out nixt the stalls. 'Now, what's thot?' says Oi, and goes to a bit av a pakehowle Oi has for the sake av convanience. There, sor, wor Riginald, and wid him the girl!

"Oi'm seein' 'twor a runaway they're going to commit, and Oi'm tillin' yez Oi'm stumped for a minute to know what to do. Riginald wor greatly ixcited, Oi could see, and the girl wor trimblin' hard.

"'Oi can't take moy hoorse,' says he; 'he's lame.'

"'Thin lit us wait,' says the girl.

"'No, boy hivin!' says he, and rushes at the first door he comes to, which wor Biss's.

"'O moy, O moy,' thinks Oi, 'if he roides thot youngster the graif av the owld man at the losin' av his daughter will near kill him.' And Oi can see he's goin' to roide her. What to do Oi dunno, so Oi stands and does nothin' frantickally; and purty soon he lades the little mare out av the stall and troies to put the broidle onty her; but 'tis moiles too big enough, and he whips out his knoife



"Whirr-roo! Oh'm jerkin' him only the fure."

and cuts a howle in the throatlatch. Thin he claps a saddle onty her, and she's not loikin' it. She stips about loike a man wid a pain in his taith, and soon Riginald loses his timper intoirely and jabs her in the flank wid his knoife.

"'Twor thin Oi'm doin' somethin'—though, bejabers, sor, Oi'm knowin' no more what to do than Oi knows at first. Oi owpens the door and says what's up? The girl's alridy on her hoorse and waitin'. Riginald gives a growl, throwin' the saddle aside, and lapses on the bare back av the cowlt. But would she go? No, sor! She stands quiverin', not movin' a hoof. She's onty the game, Oi'm thinkin'. Riginald, still howldin' the knoife, troies to jab her wid it agin, and Oi loses me timper. Whir-roo! Oi'm jerkin' him onty the flure and stippin' on him a bit Oi dunno, and he's swearin' loike a dago parrot, and the girl's down off her mount, howldin' her ears and shakin' wid sobs.

"The racket wakes up owld Grimley, him not slapin' yit, and he comes rushin' out, wid Smith follyin'. Riginald down't wait to explain; he slopes off inty the dark av the trays, and the nixt day he sinds a man for his traps and hoorse. The girl slid inty the house, and Smith hangs around whoile Oi drisses the mare's cut and puts her to bid. He's not pumpin' me. He's seein' it all plain enough, and he's thinkin' dapely. The whole party wint home in the mornin' widout seein' Blanche, it bein' given out thot she wor near did wid sudden illness, and 'twor loike a picnic in the rain, thot damp and dismal yez down't know.

"Thot's all, sor. The girl wor married two years ago, Oi'm hearin', to a felly named Jones, one av thim she frosted. Smith niver give her another chance. Mebbe

'twor bitter for him, Oi dunno, but she wor a foine girl, barrin' her foolishness—the bist av them has thot—and, on the quiet, sor, she loses nothin' whin she down't get him."

I extended my hand to Mr. Magarvey, after a silence which seemed to indicate beyond doubt that the reminiscence was at an end, and looked him squarely in the face.

"Patrick," said I, "you have changed somewhat of late years. Did you know that we had met before?"

"No, sor," said he, and his eyes twinkled with wonder; "beggin' your pardon, sor, what's the name?"

"My name," said I, in what was intended to be an impressive manner, "is Smith. I have taken to the wearing of a beard only recently, and it seems a good disguise."

He looked bewildered for an instant—merely a flash. Then he said: "The Smiths is a very numerous family, sor, and 'tis many av thim Oi've mit in me day. Oi—Oi trust, sor," running his finger lightly over the mare's scar, "thot 'tis happy Oi'm foindin' yez, sor."

I might have said yes, but, being honest, I said nothing.

A Distressing Situation.

A Distressing Situation.

As Von Blumer opened the door his wife tiptoed downstairs to meet him, and, after the customary kiss, said :

"Dear, the Bishop has come."

"What Bishop?" said Von Blumer.

"You know perfectly well. Bishop Lancaster. This is his regular visit to the diocese, and it happens to be my turn to invite him. At least, I insisted upon his coming."

On his way to the house that afternoon Von Blumer had stopped at the office of the brewery and ordered two dozen bottles of beer to be delivered at once. At the grocer's he had ordered other materials, more dry and less necessary to the hilarity of the evening. That noon it had suddenly occurred to him that it would be a pleasant thing to invite the four men with whom he had taken luncheon up to his house in the evening for a quiet game of cards. Von Blumer had been married four years and a half—just six months short of the allotted period when a man learns not to take any step without first consulting his wife.

"I didn't know anything about it," he said.

Mrs. Von Blumer eyed him petulantly.

"That's just like a man," she exclaimed, snappishly.

"You never listen to what I say, you are so absorbed in your own affairs. I told you all about it a week ago—how I had written, and the Bishop replied that he would be here this afternoon."

Von Blumer suppressed an inward shudder, and braced up. There was no way out of it, he knew, but to put on a bold front. Deception was impossible.



"How could you do it?"

"I suppose," he said, "that at the present moment the Bishop is occupying the best front bedroom."

"Yes."

"Then," said Von Blumer, "in a few moments he will have the pleasure of seeing a brewery wagon drive up and deliver two dozen bottles of beer. I hope he won't think it is in honor of his visit." He stopped her with a gesture, and quickly proceeded: "Now, my dear, I'm sorry, but it can't be helped. I had forgotten all about the existence even of this Bishop, and to-day invited some of the boys up for a quiet little game of cards. So far as I can see, the Bishop will have to make the best of it."

There was a painful silence. The greatest tragedies of life usually take place in silence. Then Mrs. Von Blumer gave one of those inexpressible "Ohs" which indicate that a woman's nature has been stirred to its depths.

"How could you do it?" she said at last. "He is so strict. I don't see how we can keep it from him." It was natural that this should be her first thought. The same thing occurred to Eve.

"We can't and we won't," said Von Blumer, with a tragic wave of his hand. "I have invited a few friends to my home to play cards—yes, poker," and he raised his voice slightly, in spite of a horror-stricken look of warning on his wife's face—"and to drink beer, and I don't care who knows it. I didn't ask him here. He isn't my guest. Of course, he is yours, and he shall receive all proper courtesy. You go to church regularly, and it is all right that you should have him. But there is no reason why I should pose as a hypocrite. In his line, I presume, he is an admirable



"I hadn't counted on the Bishop."

man, but I don't consider that he is one whit better than I am. If I want to play cards and drink beer in my own home I'm going to do it. I'm not ashamed of it." Von Blumer was aroused. He was only a plain, ordinary man, with small capacities outside of his regular duties.

The delivery wagon drove up. The Bishop was probably at that moment sitting in the window of his room on the second floor front.

"There!" said Mrs. Von Blumer. "He will see, and to-night he will hear them come in—and the noise, too. Oh, what shall I do?"

"Do!" exclaimed Von Blumer, sternly, as he cut the string on a box of perfectos he had brought with him. "Tell him the truth, of course."

The clock struck ten.

Von Blumer, excusing himself momentarily from his companions, went downstairs past the wide-open door of the Bishop's empty room to the library where his wife sat alone reading. "My dear," he said, "do you suppose you could send some one out for another dozen bottles of beer?"

"You don't mean to say," said Mrs. Von Blumer, "that you want more beer?"

Von Blumer waved his hand apologetically above.

"Yes," he replied. "You know I hadn't counted on the Bishop."

*The
Princess's Stepmother.*



WITHIN comparatively recent times there was a princess who had a beautiful father. He had a lovely golden beard, deep violet eyes, a musical second-tenor voice, and the most charming disposition in the whole world. The queen was a long time deceased, little regretted by her subjects, and the princess thought that she should enjoy having a stepmother. So one day she summoned her father to her audience room and told him that she thought he had been a widower quite long enough.

"You know," said she, "that while you do your very best, we haven't had any thoroughly good preserves since dear mamma was no more. The Friday cleaning is much neglected, and the bric-à-brac has not been dusted since I don't know when."

"True, my dear," said the king sweetly.

"Well, papa, how does the idea strike you?"

"Favorably, my love," said the king. "I feel that I am not the housekeeper your mother was, and the marketing weighs on my mind. I am tired of hominy and of oatmeal. Buckwheat cakes are not wholesome if eaten to excess, and really I am sometimes so puzzled to know what to have for breakfast that I can't sleep at night, and wake up in the morning all of a twitter—just like the dear little birdies."

"Poor papa!" said the princess, thoughtfully. "It is quite possible that a stepmother queen would relieve you of many of these details. At all events, I should like to have you marry somebody, if you don't mind very much."

"Certainly not," said the excellent king. "But I would like my bride to be as patrician and aristocratic as possible."

"Of course," said his daughter, delighted that her father made no graver conditions.

So she sent for her private stenographer and typewriter, and caused the following notice to be published in all the newspapers next morning:

"AAA. Wanted—A stepmother to the royal princess. Must be of highest lineage, good housekeeper, domestic and come well recommended. Apply at the palace for three days between twelve and four. No triflers."

This advertisement attracted some attention. As there happened to be no railway disasters or explosions for the three days during which it appeared, there was little to occupy the people's minds, and the stepmother vacancy was much discussed.

In a remote suburb of the capital a graceful and slender widow's son of some twenty-five summers was sent by his mother to buy a loaf of bread. Usually the widow made her own bread, but that day there had been something the matter with the yeast cake, and the rising had not arisen as it should have done.

As the baker handed over the twisted loaf, he wrapped it in a piece of the newspaper in which was the notice already quoted, and, on his way home, the young man's eye caught the words: "Wanted—A stepmother." He could hardly wait for the elevator to reach the modest flat on the seventh floor before he had rushed into the



"She sent for her private stenographer."

widow's apartments and breathlessly read aloud the item.

"There, mother!" he cried, "I always knew that some day there would be a chance for you!"

"How do you mean, my son?" asked the widow, placidly, laying aside her spectacles.

"The hand of fate is in it," he shouted with enthusiasm. "Promise me that you will not let such an

opportunity pass by! *You* must be the princess's step-mother. Grant me this boon!"

"I have never refused you any reasonable request," said she, thoughtfully. "But this really requires some deliberation."

"Why, mother, everybody says that the king is perfectly charming and——"

"Moderately respectable monarchs are always described as charming—by their contemporaries," said the widow. "Now if I could only get the opinion of posterity, I should feel safer——"

"What have elderly people starting out to make their fortunes got to do with safety!" he exclaimed, impatiently. "Now, if it were *I* who was to marry, caution would be in place—but elderly people—and second marriages—really, mother, your ideas are quite revolutionary."

"I suppose you must be right," she said, musingly. "You've had little or no experience of life, and your opinions ought to be fresh and unbiassed by the exultation of success or the bitterness of failure."

So the widow rose slowly, and, picking the threads carefully from her gown, threw them in the grate instead of brushing them off on the rag carpet.

"What would I better wear?" she asked, for she was beginning to be interested, in spite of herself.

"I would suggest your gray watered silk," said the young man, "and that bonnet with the black aigrette. You know the princess is opposed to the Audubon Societies, and if you win her favor it will go a long way with so dutiful a father."

"Would I better go to see my fairy god-son first?" asked the widow, doubtfully.

Now the fairy god-son was a young gnome, who had

turned out very badly from a gnomic point of view, being rather tall and slender and handsome, and having a disposition generous to the degree of positive prodigality. Therefore, the real son, who, it may be added right here, was not without ulterior designs upon the hand of the princess, inclined to the view that his foster-brother wouldn't be of much use and that, anyhow, he didn't want him around before his own affairs were satisfactorily settled.

"You can ask him to the wedding afterward, you know," he said, grudgingly.

"To be sure," replied his mother, and having by this time completed her toilet, she rang the bell for the elevator and set out for the palace.

As might be imagined, there was quite a crowd going in that direction, and any one, upon arriving at the royal residence, would have been sure to mistake it for a department store on bargain day. Every court, hall and apartment was packed close with women in gala attire. Naturally, many of them belonged to the class popularly known as "beggar-maids," for, despite the requirement of aristocratic birth mentioned in the "ad," it was difficult to believe that traditional usage would be entirely set aside, and, besides, it was a notorious fact that, once wealthy, it was the easiest thing in the world to find that a beggar-maid, or a politician's daughter—or anybody, in fact—was just full of royal blood—in disguise.

There was also quite a sprinkling of adventurous princesses from neighboring kingdoms, for the king was not so very old, and his pleasant disposition and domestic habits made him quite a catch from the standpoint of certain so-called new ideas then prevalent among women, but now happily extinct.

A number of spectators, too, were on hand, and, oddly enough, one of the first persons the widow saw, when she entered the palace, was her own god-son. This disturbed her somewhat, but, bearing home injunctions in mind, she bowed pleasantly, but distantly, and looked in the opposite direction. The fact that a herald was at that moment making a proclamation rendered these social tactics easy and natural.

The substance of the proclamation was that, in view of the unexpectedly large number of suitresses, the difficulty of making a selection and the unwillingness to offend anybody, the affair would be put on a competitive basis. Certain tasks would be prescribed; the successful candidate would receive the king's hand, the unsuccessful ones would get the executioner's—which was the simple method then in vogue to prevent all heartburnings and dissatisfaction on the part of the people who failed in such contests.

The princess sat on her throne and waited for the house to clear up; but not a person stirred, which was quite different from what would have happened had the candidates been diffident male suitors. Thereupon, after waiting a decent time, she directed her father to stand at her right hand, and the executioner at her left, and ordered the contests to begin.

The genealogical tests were passed with a rush by everybody except one extremely pretty and modest-looking young lady, who seemed a little uncertain when she got four generations back. The princess eyed her curiously for a moment and gave orders to begin the examination in higher mathematics. Here, too, all passed triumphantly, being without exception graduates of female colleges—that is, all passed except the pretty



"She ordered the contest to begin."

young lady mentioned above, who got very badly tangled up with Storm's theorem, and finally threw it aside with the remark that it was a "mean old thing, and wouldn't be of any earthly use to a woman, anyhow." The princess frowned, and matters began to look serious. Then they adjourned to the royal links, but the golf contest resulted exactly like all the others. It was required that everybody should make each hole in a single drive, the contestants being allowed to count for themselves. All succeeded again save the same young lady, who finished the nine holes with a score of forty-three, and remarked

exultantly that it was the best she had ever done on those links.

So it went on with unvarying results, except that in the wheelwoman's fancy tourney the girl who had failed so systematically actually refused to ride, on the absurd pretext that she didn't look well on a wheel. To be sure, none of the rest did either, but *they* all had strong, masterful characters, and acted just as if they didn't know how ungraceful they were.

Finally, all the contests were over, and the judges announced that everybody had succeeded in everything—everybody except *one*.

The princess seemed nonplussed, and the situation seemed worse than ever. All of the successful candidates were talking at once, several were making set orations, and a bargain-counter movement upon the throne and the monarch seemed imminent.

During the confusion, however, the gnome had taken occasion to slip up to the princess and propose to her, which was so unprecedented and untimely that she promptly accepted him, whereupon he called her attention to the fact that, really the only basis for settling the stepmother imbroglio was to give her father's hand to the young lady who had failed, she being the only unique person among the contestants.

"And execute all the others?" cried the princess, gleefully, clapping her hands.

"No," said the gnome. "Why not compromise with them on the basis of suspending sentence?"

This suggestion appealed at once to the logical sense of the princess and proclamation was made accordingly.

The widow and her son were naturally highly indignant at the gnome, who could give no excuse for his



"The gnome had taken occasion to slip up to the princess and propose to her."

conduct except that the young lady he had helped was an utter stranger to him, and that he had no idea that his foster-mother intended entering the contest.

So the gnome married the princess, and the young lady who failed in everything married the king, and, curiously enough, before six months had passed the queen was managing the kingdom, and her husband and her stepchildren and everything and everybody, and not one of them all ever suspected it or ever dreamed of being dissatisfied.



A Sparrow Tragedy.

In the spring, the sparrow's fancy
Lightly turns to thoughts of love.

Thus quoth, one day in early spring, Mr. Thomas Endicott Chirp to Mr. William Brewster Wattle.

They were perched upon a tree in Boston Common, overlooking the Frog Pond, on the curb of which several malignant cases of flirtation were already manifesting advanced symptoms.

Mr. Chirp, or Tom Chirp, as he was familiarly called, was a confirmed bachelor, just completing his third year. He was very highly respected among his acquaintances as a bird whose opinions were of some importance, since he rarely advanced them unsought, and then only after careful deliberation.

Willie Wattle had just experienced his first winter, and was impatiently awaiting the delights of spring. He had met Chirp at the Somerset Club, an exclusive organization which gathered in the cozy corner of a building just across on Beacon Street, and they had become fast friends. Each found in the other the qualities that he himself lacked, yet coveted. Chirp liked the fresh, frank boyishness of Wattle, while the latter admired the self-reliant solidity and unruffled serenity of the former.

Willie had been confiding to Tom his fondness for a certain young miss, which evoked the poetic introduction to our story. "Yes, my fledgling," continued Tom, "I don't mind telling you I've been through it myself."

"Is that so!" exclaimed Willie; "why, I thought you were a bachelor by preference."

"So it is generally believed, and it is practically the truth, as I might have mated a dozen times had I wished. But, in confidence, I was once pretty hard hit. It was my first spring, and just when I thought all was going as merrily as the fountain, she mated with an old duffer. I must admit I took on quite a bit; but I was pretty young then, and philosophy can come only with age and experience. Careless, unreasoning gaiety left me, and for a while I grew sour, then gradually became what you see me. I never excite myself over anything, but take life as I find it, without expecting to find too much. On the other claw, I take care not to get pessimistic. It simply means that while I may not be deliriously happy, I am at least comfortable. Still, I like to see the fresh enthusiasm of youth, and in fact rather envy you a bit, for, with it all, you are not aggressively fresh. As to Miss Chippy, I hope you will go in and win her, and honor me with your confidence."

"Thank you, old bird," replied Willie; "I suppose I'm a weak fool, but really I haven't any self-confidence whatever. When I try to talk with her my bill chatters so that I positively stutter. Then some cool young chap comes along and flutters a wing, and hops cavalierly before her, and she ignores me altogether."

"Why don't you peck at her to attract her attention, and then hop your prettiest?"

"I simply haven't the courage. You see, I was unfortunate in having been the youngest of a large family. Mother died about the time I was able to fly, so I was brought up by my father and elder brothers. Father was very stern and exacted absolute, instantaneous obedience. The result was that I, being so much younger than the others, was kept very busy obeying one or the other all



"My bill chatters so that I positively stutter."

day, and eventually, since anything I chose to do without orders was sure to displease some member of the family, ceased to act except as directed. As I look back it astonishes me to think I should have submitted to it, but you see I knew nothing different, and it seemed to me perfectly natural. The pity is that I can't shake this off. If any one gets the least particle aggressive I instantly subside, and, on the other claw, if any one shows me the least affection, I am ready to follow him to the sun."

"I understand your case," said Tom, "and there are many others similarly placed, though they haven't the wit to see it. Come over on the grass with me and I'll teach you the Newport flutter and the Casino hop, and if they don't catch Miss Chippy it's because my name is Chump and not Chirp."

They hopped about the grass with fluttering wings, until Tom pronounced Willie the personification of grace. They then separated for the night, Tom going to the club where he lodged, and Willie hurrying away to the Choral Union. This is the largest choral society in town, and meets every evening at sundown on the tree in King's Chapel Burial Grounds. Here they held forth

for an hour or more, to the astonished admiration of all not otherwise engaged.

Willie did not remain long, however. His head was too full of Miss Chippy and the intended bombardment of her affections, so he returned to the precincts of the Frog Pond. Here he practiced his hop and flutter until, intoxicated with excitement and self-approval, he became entirely oblivious to all around him.

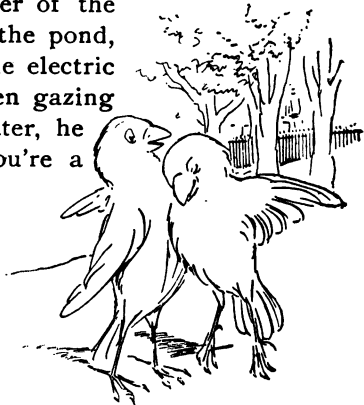
About ten feet away, a venerable old grandma had been hopping sedately about, until suddenly she perceived this handsome cavalier cavorting amorously to and fro. It must be for her; there certainly was no one else in the vicinity; so down she swooped on him, threw herself on his breast, and exclaimed, "Oh, this is so sudden!"

Willie was at first too much surprised to do more than stare. Then, recovering himself somewhat, but still under the influence of his previous intoxication, he plunged madly into a reckless flirtation. I assure you it was his first offense.

Some time later, under cover of the darkness, he slipped away to the pond, where, in the brilliancy of the electric light, he drank copiously; then gazing upon his reflection in the water, he winked at it and said, "You're a devil!"

He then flew to his father's home, Beacon Street Mall, Public Garden, third tree on the left from Arlington Street.

He was severely scolded for being out so late, but paid no attention to it. There was a mist in his brain, and a



"Oh, this is so sudden!"

ringing in his ears that was so unprecedented and delightful that I verily believe if Mr. Wattle hadn't been too sleepy to prolong it, Willie might have answered back. He settled himself quietly on his perch, however, shook the dust out of his clothes, and with a merry twinkle, exclaiming, "Oh, not so bad!" he put his head under his wing and slept.

One afternoon, a week later, Chirp was perched at the club, when in hopped Willie, with dejection exuding from every feather.

"Hello, fledgy," said Tom; "you're not a living picture of 'Gaiety.' What's up?"

Willie perched himself in a secluded angle, and leaned his head against the wall without a reply.

A sympathetic smile played round the corners of Tom's bill for a moment, then he said, "Come along with me; I guess we understand each other."

Willie went, and when they reached the tree of confidences Tom said, "Now, out with it."

"Well, the amount of it is, I've been turned down; and I'm going to—throw up the whole business."

"Oh, nonsense!" said Tom.

"I've nothing to live for," retorted Willie. "Besides, I'm not fit to live. A bird has only to look ugly at me and I'm done for, even if I am in the right, and we both know it."

"Why don't you stand up in your claws, then?"

"Simply because I don't know how. You see, when I tried it at home, I was pecked into submission, and now you might as well expect to hatch out a cow from a cucumber as to get boldness out of me."

"Well, let's hear about Miss Chippy."

"The day after I last saw you I met her at Mrs. Fluffy's

five-o'clock douche, at the Venus Fountain. She looked charming, and gave me considerable encouragement, so I put my name down for two showers and a plunge. She looked a little alarmed, but said, confidentially, 'All right, but don't tell anybody.' I promised.

"First we had a shower, and I, at least, enjoyed it very much; but when I came for the plunge she asked to be excused, as she had a chill; and as for the second shower, she was just starting off with that Dick Speckle, when I came up and asked if this wasn't mine.

"She looked me plumb in the eye, and said, 'I don't know, is it?'

"We referred to her list, and found it was Speckle's. While they were douching, I went and examined her list carefully, and I'll swear Speckle scratched out my name and put in his, for the gravel looked kicked up for quite a space around. He's an awfully self-important duffer, anyway, simply because he douches so well. He always has some new movement—the Caprice or the Lenox, or something else—and the girls like it because it attracts attention.

"Well, afterward, when I saw her alone, she said she was *very* sorry, and confided to me that she believed he tampered with her list. She gave me a long, warm look that made me gulp down something that wasn't there, and all was again serene.

"The next day I had a very pleasant fly with her, and we became very confidential; she called me 'Willie' and I called her 'Dot.'

"The day after that I saw her in the Public Garden, and determined this was a good chance to settle the matter, so I gave her the song and dance you taught me, and I doubt if you could have done any better. My wings

were extended at just the right angle, and fluttered with just the proper degree of tremulousness. I was really in very good form, and had made quite an impression, when along came that Speckle, and my self-confidence began to escape.

"You know he is uncommonly graceful, anyway, hang him! and he knows it, too, so he didn't care if there were a dozen of me. I plucked up heart, however, and remembering how slightly she spoke of him at the douche party, resumed my promenade.



"Willie, I guess you'd better go home and do the chores."

"He kept right on, as though I wasn't there, and in a few minutes I discovered that she seemed to agree with him.

"I hopped over and pecked at her as you told me to, but I'm afraid I was a trifle too emphatic, for she flew at me and damaged me considerably. Speckle then thought he would have some fun with me, and I was beginning to think I didn't want her anyway, when another bird appeared and gave Speckle the worst feather dusting I ever saw. Speckle disappeared.

"I looked at my champion, and found to my astonishment that it was father. Of course I felt reassured, and was about to resume my relations with Miss Chippy, when he gave me a look that would crack an egg, and said, 'Willie, I guess you'd better go home and do the chores.' With that he flew off with her, and she looked mightily amused.

"Now, what could I do—fly in the face of my father? And then that 'Willie,' and 'the chores'—you must admit it was d—d humiliating."

"An uncomfortable situation, surely," said Tom.

"Well," resumed Willie, "later in the day I encountered her on my way home. I put the question right to her—would she have me or not. She looked surprised, and said she had supposed our relations to be simply Platonic. Then she added, archly, 'I'll be a mother to you, though.'"

"Sure enough. The old gentleman, being a widower, had come into the game on his own account. So now they are mated, and I have to do her chores, and get ordered around worse than ever."

"I wouldn't stand it," said Tom. "Why don't you take bachelor's apartments, and let them raise their own messengers?"

"So she supposed your relations were simply Platonic, did she? Well, if I know the type—and I think I do—your father will think his relations are simply Plutonic. Never mind, your turn will come yet. By the way, I've gone and done it. Yes, sir; mated last Tuesday. The dearest little puff you ever saw. I didn't suppose I could ever care for any one again, but find that all that is necessary is a reasonable amount of attractiveness and mutual consideration. Time and association will do the rest. Come over and see us—Commonwealth Avenue,

first tree on the right, west of Berkeley Street. Now cheer up. It will come out all right. Good day."

"Yes, that's easy enough to say when it's the other chap," brooded Willie. "Still, I suppose he's more than half right. If I could only go into a trance until things straighten out, it would be comparatively easy; but how am I ever to drag on like this, with a windmill in my head and a millstone in my chest?"



"I suppose my next duties will be as nursemaid."

"Hello! Here's where you are, is it?" broke in Pa Wattle. "Now get home pretty quick; your mother wants you," he added, with a malicious twinkle in his eye.

Willie pulled himself together to rebel, but pa came at him so viciously that he changed his mind, and concluded it would be more comfortable at present to acquiesce.

Pa followed closely behind, and on arriving at the trees, stepma informed Willie that he was to sit on the eggs

while she and pa went to call on his brother Eddie and his mate.

Willie meekly slid into the nest and was soon left to his own reflections, which were hardly what one would call cheerful.

"Well, this is a pretty occupation for a self-respecting young sparrow with a dark-brown spot on his breast. Wasn't it enough to have me errand boy for the entire family all last season without turning me into an incubator? I suppose my next duties will be as nursemaid—and for *her* offspring, too! Oh, this is maddening! I've a good mind to light out and let the pesky things get addled. That would hardly be fair, though; and just because they are mean enough to take advantage of my amiability is no reason why I should make myself a fratricide, even in embryo."

About sunset the pair returned, and Mrs. Wattle, being rather fatigued, relieved Willie on the nest. He then flew back to his lonely retreat near the Frog Pond, where he perched in the angle formed by a limb, and leaned his weary little head against the tree trunk. Here he remained till after dark, going over and over the situation, and always coming back to the same point.

"I don't like to do it," he exclaimed at last, "but don't see any other way out of it, so here goes."

He looked down at the pond, but the water seemed so dark and cold that he turned away with a sigh and flew out to Tremont Street, where the electric lights were blazing brilliantly. He looked at one of these intently for a moment, then shivered and said, "Not that way!" He then flew straight up, up, until the city looked like a cluster of diamonds far below; then closing his eyes and folding his wings, he breathed a little prayerful sigh of

appeal to his Maker, and yielded himself to the force of gravity.

The next morning his poor little body was swept up by the unsympathetic street department, without a thought being paid to the unsatisfied longing, hope and despair that had torn the sensitive little heart within that tiny bunch of feathers.

For a day or two Mrs. Wattle wondered why he didn't return, and a friend occasionally asked after him; then everything moved on as serenely as though he had never been.

We may dip a cupful out of the ocean, but the waters close and remain as before.



◆OLD◆GEORGE◆

Old George.

Old George is a trump, and nobody envies him his big run of luck. And yet it does seem funny that of all men—that is, all our men—Old George should take the stakes. It's the rusty old saw over again, about the race not being to the swift—and yet that's not just pat, either, because Old George is the swiftest of the swift. Not in his head, you see—just in his legs. For George's legs were the glory of the 'Varsity. Even Prexy himself alluded to them as laurel-twined props. Yes, Old George could run like—well, there was nothing in the other 'Varsities that could run like him, and that's description enough. He wasn't strong in books. These big runners never are. But you can rest assured that he had all the coaching he could stand, and we just shouldered and boosted and carried him through everything. Nobody ever knew such a dear old fellow—not a muff, you know; but so willing and pleased and grateful for everything that was done for him. Yes, and always watching out to do some good turn for the fellows. He had money, too, but it didn't hurt him.

Well, Bertie Middaugh took a house party down to his home at Tauntum after commencement, just a half-dozen of us, and he coaxed Old George to go along. Bertie had his sister down for commencement—a stunning girl, half a million in her own right—and we were all spoons on her except George. He never cared for girls.

So we went down, and it was a grand old place. And

Bella, that was Bertie's sister, had invited up some of her classmates from Smith, and we made up a right merry party. All except Old George. He didn't seem to quite enter into the spirit of the thing. He was the best fellow you ever saw at helping other people to feel comfortable, but no earthly good at letting them entertain him.

Well, the third morning we were there Old George came strolling into the breakfast room with a wonderful glow on his face. Somebody asked him where he got it, and George claimed it came out of a pink saucer, but I noticed just then that Bertie was winking hard at me. As soon as George strolled out of the way Bertie whispers, "I'll bet you a tenner that Old George has been sprinting on father's quarter-mile track back of the big barn." I laughed and told the girls, and Bella at once proposed that we get up early the next morning and slip over to the track, and catch Old George at his beloved pastime. So it was quickly arranged.

We were all up just at sunrise and on our way to the quarter-mile. As we cautiously approached the barn we saw some of George's clothes lying in the big doorway, and a moment later, as we turned the corner, there was Old George himself, in full racing costume, with a blanket over his shoulders, just stepping onto the track. He was a good deal cut up when we burst into view, but Old George is too much the gentleman to show any chagrin. We all begged him to run for us, but he stoutly demurred until Bella made a personal matter of it. At which he gravely bowed and tossed the blanket to one side. I took out my watch, and then—and then a dreadful thing happened!

Jim Blakeslee had been smoking a cigarette, and he



"There was Old George himself."

must have flung it down, half-smoked, on the grass near where Bella was standing. She had on some kind of fluffy, white summer dress, with—with blue ribbons, I think. Anyway, she looked positively stunning, as she always did. She stood there in her loveliness, watching Old George with eager eyes, and the first thing we knew one of the girls screamed and we looked around, and there was Bella all aflame! Then she screamed, too, and started down the lane like a mad thing, the flames leaping over her head, and we standing there like wooden fools. Old George heard the scream, too, and whirled around. He snatched up the blanket, and in twenty great strides had caught the poor girl. He flung the blanket about her, he thrust her down on the turf, he rolled her over, he beat at the fire in her hair with his naked hands.

It was all over in less time than it takes me to tell it, and then Old George leaped at Bertie.

"For God's sake," he stammered, "where's the doctor?"

"Half a mile down the road," gasped Bertie; "white house, green blinds."

Before he got the last word fairly out George was off down the lane, running at his top speed.

I saw his great race with Ambrose, the Cambridge crack, but he never ran as he did for that country doctor. The old medic told us afterwards that when George burst into the yard that morning he thought he had to deal with a circus lunatic. But George gasped out his errand in a half-dozen words, and the doctor ran for his horse and chaise, which fortunately were standing at the side porch.

As he turned to speak to George he caught sight of his hands.

"Heavens, man!" he cried; "look at your fingers!"

"Hurry!" yelled George. But the doctor reached under the seat of the chaise and drew out a bottle.

"That's the stuff for burns," he cried as he tossed it to George; "rub it on your hands."

The next moment George was out in the road, bottle in hand, running at top speed again, the doctor lashing the old mare after him.



*"But George
gasped out his
errand in a half
dozen words."*

It didn't seem as if Old George had been gone any time at all when we saw him flying back. He whirled into the lane, running like a greyhound. As he came up he motioned backward, and we saw the doctor's mare coming over the hilltop. There was something shining in George's hand. "For burns!" he gasped, and pitched headlong on his face.

Well, when the doctor got there he had two patients, for Old George had completely collapsed, and when his horribly blistered hands were tied up, we had to half carry him to the house.

But next morning, when he learned that Bella's burns were not serious, that her face was untouched, and that she would be out in a few days—"thanks to the circus lunatic," continued the doctor—Old George, barring his bandaged hands, was all right again.

Well, the doctor kept Bella pretty quiet all the morning, but in the afternoon he let us go into the room and see her for a moment. So we went in very quietly, and said a word or two, and Bella smiled and softly thanked us for our good wishes, and we came out again. All except Old George, who wouldn't go in with us, despite our urgings. No. He shook his head and hung back, and looked at his bandaged hands, and said it would be a shame to take the smell of liniment into a sick room. Well, I told him how Bella received us, propped up against big pillows, with her beautiful hair spread out around her, and I added that she never looked more lovely. I noticed that Old George's eyes glistened, and that he suddenly breathed hard, but I had no idea what it meant.

Well, when we came out of Bella's room Bertie had lingered behind. Both the auntie and the nurse were



"He rolled her over and over."



"— and burst out a-crying!"

busy elsewhere for the moment, and Bella called to him. He asked if she wanted anything—he told us this afterwards—and she answered, "Yes, dear." Bertie says it took him by surprise. She hadn't called him "dear" for years. "Is it a drink?" he asked. She shook her head. Did she want to see the flowers? No, she didn't want to see the flowers. What then? "You know what I want, Bertie," she whispered. "I want to see him—alone."

Bertie wasn't the brightest youth in the 'Varsity, but he grasped what she meant at once. He just turned, and came out, and called Old George. "My boy," he said, "sister wants to see you." George trembled and began to balk. "Say," he murmured, "I can't go in

there with these evil-smelling boxing gloves," and he held up his damaged fists. Then Bertie stopped him. "Is that the way to treat a lady's request?" he asked, half savagely. So Old George let his head drop at that, and went back with Bertie. "Is this it?" inquired that facetious youth, but he told us that he was sure Bella didn't hear him. "For, by Jove," he vehemently added, "I'll be hanged if she didn't suddenly lean forward and kiss his bandaged hands and burst out a-crying!"

Half an hour later Old George came out, his head up and his face shining. He walked straight up to Bertie and led him aside, and held him in close conversation. Pretty soon George strolled out in the road and Bertie came back to us. He was silent for a moment or two, and then he abruptly said:

"They're going to be married!"

We gasped. We knew well enough who "they" were, and we couldn't say a word.

It was Bertie who broke the silence.

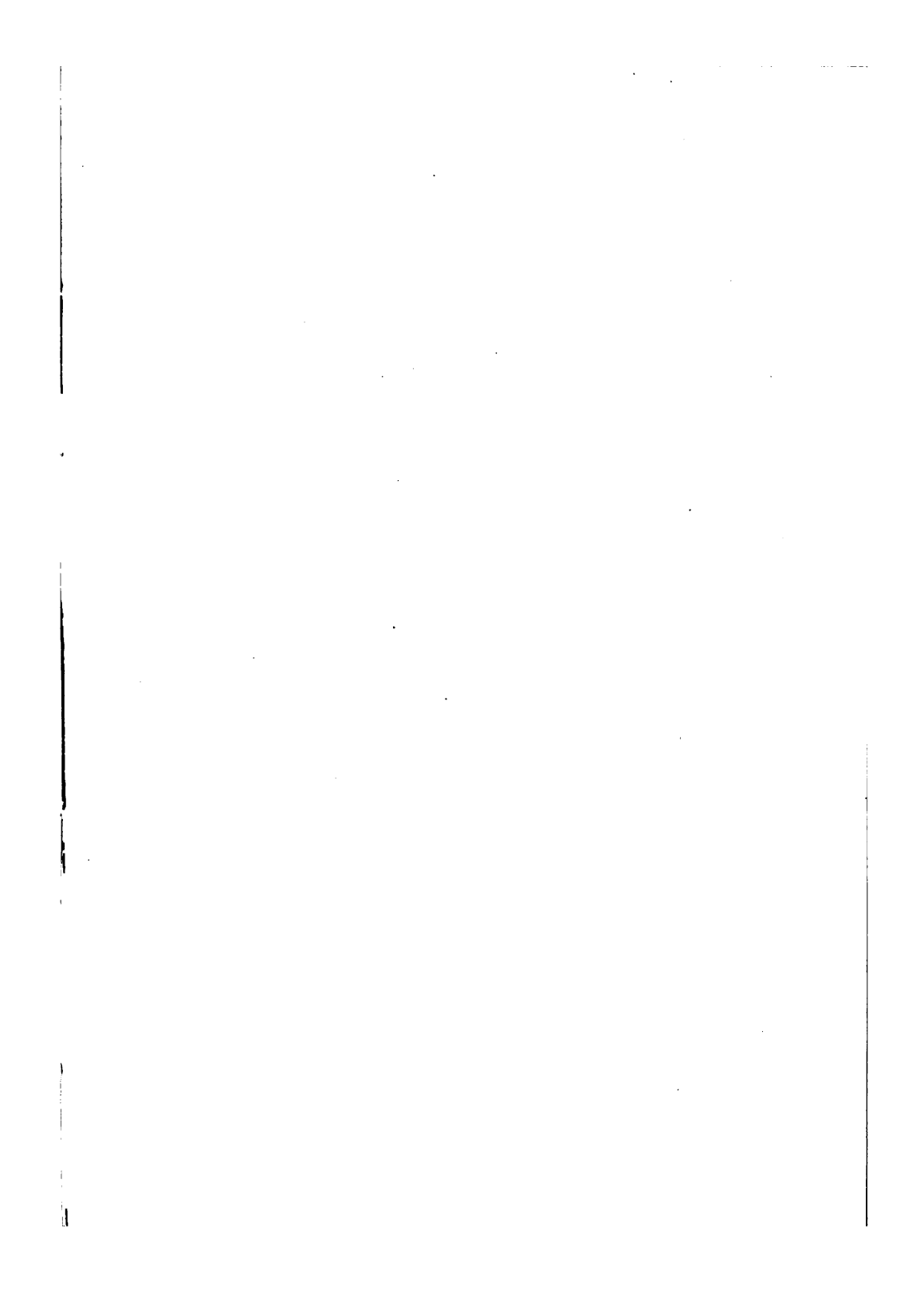
"Girls are such conundrums," said this cynic of twenty-three; "I gave them up long ago."

Then Charlie Denham spoke.

"Queerest thing," he said; "nobody knew he loved her."

"Sister knew," said Bertie.

And that's why I began by saying that nobody who knows him envies George his windfall of luck—and yet it does seem queer that the windfall should tumble to Old George.



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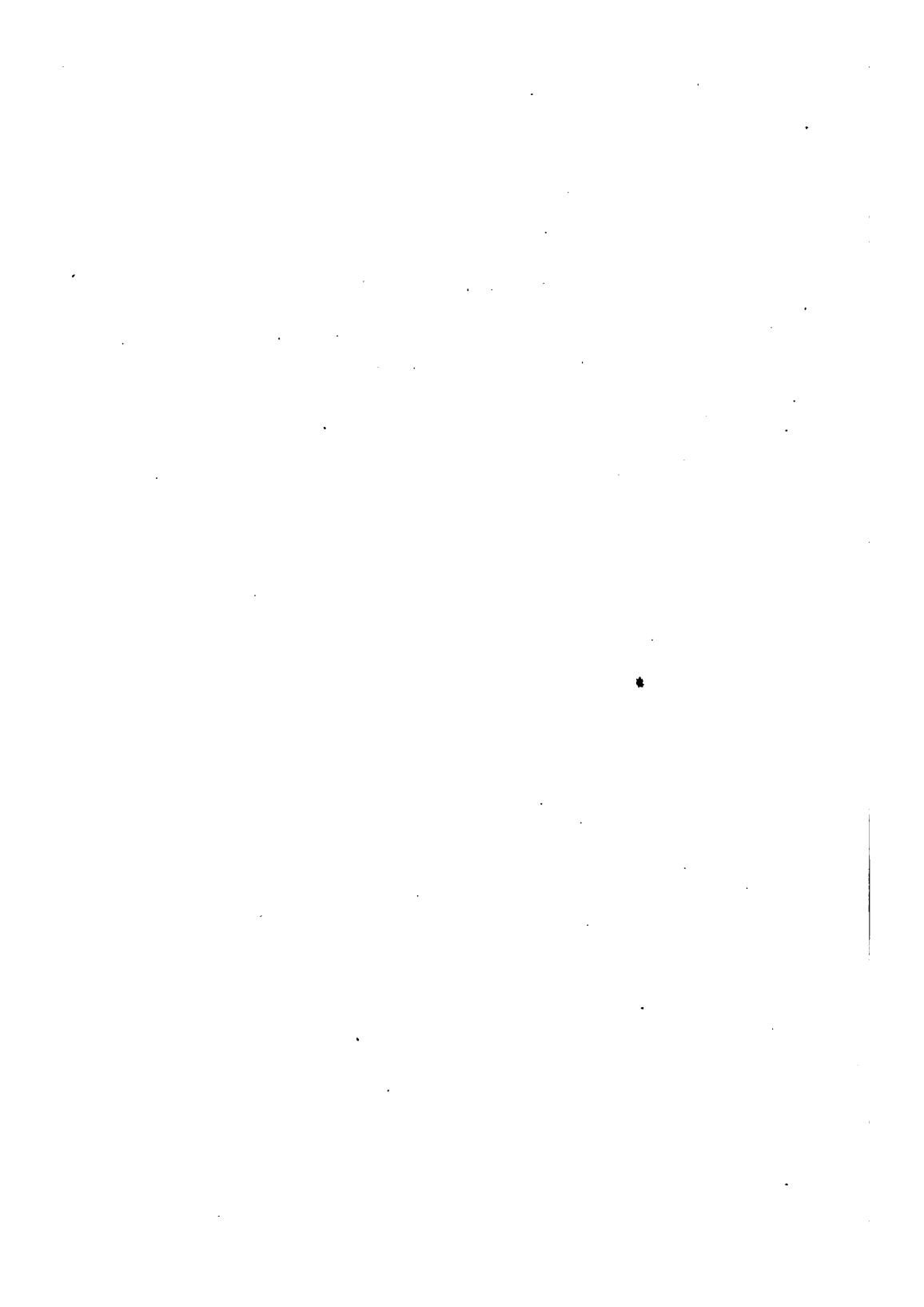
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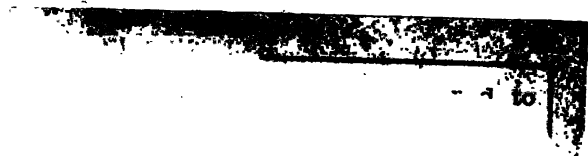
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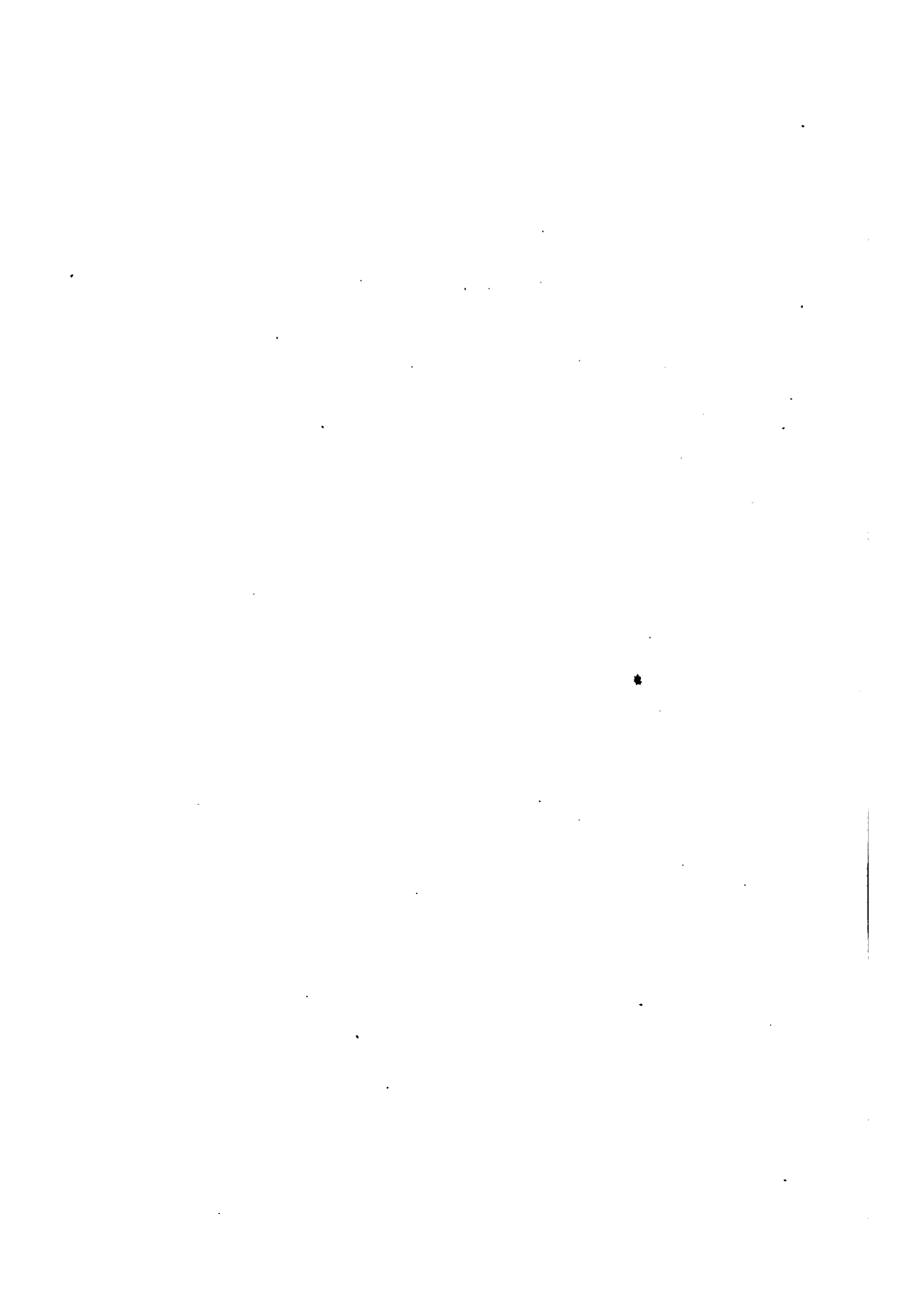
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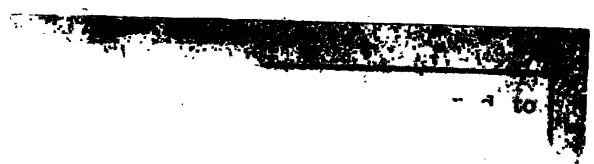
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